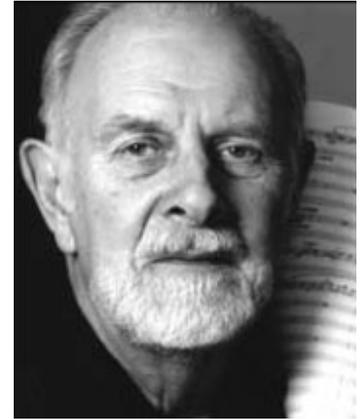


## **JAMES WILSON**

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If you like, for example, Prokofiev's Lieutenant Kije or Kodaly's Hary Janos you will probably like much of the music of James Wilson. His colourful Symphony no. 1 of 1960 has just the qualities needed to stimulate interest in the work of a composer little known outside Ireland where he has lived since the late 1940s following war service with the Royal Navy. But, sadly, few are aware of his prodigious achievements; for example, his one-act opera Letters to Theo won an Independent Arts Award in 1985 and his two-act opera Grinning at the Devil of 1985 played to packed houses in the Riddersalen Theatre, Copenhagen in 1989 with critical acclaim. One paper even called it a 'world sensation', which may be an exaggeration; Opera magazine praised it highly.



James Walter Wilson was born at 356 Essex Road, Islington, London on 27 September 1922. His father, Edgar Wilson, was a chemist and druggist, and died when James was only four years old. Mrs. Wilson, who was born Margaret Alice Eldridge, managed the shop during her widowhood as well as bringing up three sons.

James' parents had only slight musical interests. Mrs. Wilson enjoyed playing the piano, singing, musical comedy and the popular classics. Neither came from families with any musical pedigree. James was fascinated by music 'as far back as he can remember'. Between the years 1927 and 1932 he attended Marquess Garden School, Canonbury, and in 1931 began piano lessons with Miss Mary Maskell which continued till 1938. Around 1932 he composed a tone-poem for piano, Marshlands at Twilight, dedicated to Miss Maskell; this was about the time he would have been in the first of his seven years at Highbury County School where he was interested in French language and English Literature. From the age of sixteen he was able to read French with enjoyment including the works of Flaubert, Proust, Mallarmé and others.

In his early teenage years he made many visits to Sadler's Wells to enjoy opera and ballet. By his late teens he was also an avid concert-goer and listened intently to all types of serious music. He loved the operas of Mozart and Puccini, the ballets of Tchaikovsky as well as such superb works as Schonberg's Pierrot Lunaire and Walton's Facade. He may have undervalued some classical styles and the music of Wagner although he acknowledges Wagner's astonishingly original mind.

James had no formal higher education but he did study the arts generally by reading, attending concerts, theatres and exhibitions.

In 1939, having taken the necessary entrance exam, Wilson joined the Civil Service as a clerical officer with the Admiralty. He worked in Whitehall, then in the Citadel on the Mall. This was interrupted by war service with the Royal Navy from December 1942 to July 1946 in which he eventually attained the rank of Petty Officer (Radar). During 1946 and 1947 he attended weekly composition and instrumental classes at the Trinity College of Music, London, studying composition with Alec Rowley, who became a close friend, and piano and harpsichord with Irving Hinchcliffe and Christopher Wood. Wilson once told me that he 'used to be a reasonably good pianist and played percussion in public and also attempted the clarinet and violin'.

The last part of his naval service was spent in Londonderry when he found himself strangely attracted to Ireland. He decided to leave the Civil Service and make a complete break with his London life. An affair of the heart was also involved. He had also decided on a musical career believing that if his music were to be any good it required his full time. His mother was bemused but sympathetic. She recognised her son's increasing commitment to music and he found the music of such composers as Ravel, Debussy, Prokofiev, Britten and Stravinsky an irresistible stimulus.

There was an amateur performance by the Dublin Orchestral Players of two dances from his now-discarded ballet Esther in 1948 but, sadly, his first few years in Ireland were musically sterile. Consequently, Wilson engaged in many other things including editing a book by James Campbell, DSO, DSC, about the history of the Aegean raiding operations during the war. He also spent 'a miserable year' as an interior decorator with

a local firm 'in order to live' but 1950 and 1951 were happier and were mostly spent in sailing a thirty-ton gaff cutter to Turkey and the Greek Islands. Travel has always been a hobby. In fact Wilson has given talks on this subject, as well as music, on Radio Telefis Eireann.

In 1955, the year after the death of his mother, Wilson composed *The Island King*, a ballet in two acts. This was followed two years later by a one-act ballet *Cynara*. Neither has been performed but in 1957 his *Divertimento* for strings appeared. Cast in four movements it is an eminently likeable piece. The opening movement is lively but far from banal, with snatches of mellow warmth; music that is fresh and alive, sparkling like a mountain stream on an exhilarating day. The second may hint at an Irish jig in another lively movement of character and humour. The slow movement is rich in texture although there is one unfortunate moment which suggests the opening theme of Elgar's *Symphony no. 1*. The glorious music that follows redeems this temporary aberration. The finale is also lively if, perhaps, more lightweight; the slower central section is probably the most profound part of the whole work.

Wilson's own *Symphony no. 1* dates from 1960, cast in four movements and belonging to his 'Prokofievian period'. The first movement benefits from a strong and memorable main theme and a coherent working out of the musical argument. At times there is an almost apocalyptic feel and real excitement is generated. Trumpet figures play an important part and, in fact, are a thumb-print to be found in many of Wilson's works, and there is an impressive part for the piano. The second movement has a compelling sense of purpose and the music is always full of interest. The third movement has the glitter of a sleigh ride. It is music with which one cannot fail to be caught up, and this itself is an index of its quality. As well as the scintillation there are some grisly effects in the strings. The finale is one of fascinating contrasts from rich warmth to wonderful chordal passages; gloriously sensuous string writing to exemplary use of the piano; prominent trumpets again, and an exciting climax (really a tremendous moment) before a woodwind reprise ushers in a quiet ending. The *Violin Concerto* of 1961 has not been performed and may well have been discarded by the composer in favour of his later work in this genre namely *Pearl and Unicorn* of 1989 which is a mature, competent, introspective work.

The *Sonata for piano* of 1962 is dedicated to the Greek pianist Gina Bachauer whom Wilson had met at Wexford. They became friends and they also shared a love for Greece itself. Sadly Bachauer did not perform the sonata. The composer is philosophical about it, 'Perhaps she did not like it', he once remarked to me. Far more successful was the two-act opera for children *The Hunting of the Snark*, of 1963, which was his first work performed before the general public. It was commissioned by Lady Dorothy Mayer who has been a marvellous champion for composers and one of the finest ambassadors for music both in Great Britain and Ireland. In *The Hunting of the Snark* Wilson not only composed the music but wrote the libretto, played in the orchestra, helped design the sets and directed it. While there are some influences from Britten the fantasy elements owe something to Ravel's *Les Enfants et les Sortilèges*. This success should have established the composer but the public have short memories; what was, however, becoming clear was Wilson's pre-occupation with music for the voice and his evident ability to set diverse and difficult texts with unflinching competence. There are many fine vocal, choral and instrumental works that span his creative life, including the superb *Burns Night*, for unaccompanied chorus of 1965. It is a work of great atmosphere, at times mercurial and spiced with rhythmic variety. It is truly satisfying and occasionally sets the foot tapping. Yet Wilson, although acknowledging this work, says of his *Idle Winds* of 1966 for chorus, clarinet, timpani and piano that it is 'a dreadful work!' Conversely a very attractive work is *Anna Liffey* of 1965 for piano and orchestra. It captures the ebb and flow of the river and its famous city from dawn to night. The piano writing sparkles in this tone poem, which is as good as any by Bax. A military section may suggest Ireland's history and the famous trumpets of the first symphony reappear. It is easy listening and none the worse for that. It has truly memorable material and, towards the end, the idyllic mood of long hours on the river is successfully captured. There is bell-ringing; the morning awakens; it is a brighter day than the preceding one and this has brought more bustle into the thriving metropolis.

Wilson's wide interest in literature has led him to set many writers including William Blake in *Trefoil* of 1966 for contralto, baritone and piano, John Clare in *Songs Eternity* of 1966 for double chorus, and also in 1966 the substantial song cycle for baritone and piano *Carrion Comfort* to texts by Gerard Manley Hopkins appeared. Long vocal works must be outstanding to sustain audience interest. Combine this masterly ability to set the voice and the composer's love for Ireland and the result is an incomparable setting of W. B. Yeats

in *A Woman Young and Old* of 1966 originally scored for soprano and Irish harp but, four years later, orchestrated. This work can be likened to Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Lieben* since it is a cycle of seven poems dealing with the whole life of a woman. The first song *Before the World was made* is the song of a girl making up her face at the mirror; she is desiring but not yet in love. The beautiful wordless cantilena delays the composer word-setting gift. The second song *A First Confession* contrasts coquettishness with more serious things, in a realistic mood calling for expert vocal articulation. *Her Triumph* tells of the girl falling in love for the first time; the voice rises in a lyrical outburst from its lowest to its highest note in a setting rich with evocative atmosphere. *Consolation* is a simple but touching setting of a bitter-sweet song.

*Chosen*, which deals with the calm after passion is another truly beautiful song with a typically well-conceived vocal part. *Her Vision in the Wood*, in which the singer is now an old woman, portrays a vision of her dying lover. This is a dramatic and dark song with a tremendous climax calling not just for a soprano but also an actress. *A Last Confession* looks back over the life and tragic love unsentimentally and perhaps frivolously. After an orchestral cadenza the wordless cantilena which began the work reappears, a device that the composer was to use in his other masterpiece in this vein, namely the *Irish Songs* of 1970. Between these works are over thirty works of great interest including *Spanish Arch* of 1966 for two Irish harps named after the famous structure in Galway; the *Quintet* for accordion and strings of 1967 the first of several works inspired by the Danish instrumentalist Mogens Ellegaard which the composer believes is the first work of his maturity; the radio opera *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* of 1967; the instantly likeable and durable *Horn Concerto* of 1967; the impressive *Colloquy* for violin and piano of 1968; the *Sonata* for cor anglais and piano of 1969; the three-act opera, *Twelfth Night*, of 1969, which attracted good reviews; two splendid solo piano works, *Thermagistris* of 1968 and *Capricci* of 1969, which, as with most of his piano works, calls for high technical assurance. There are four other works of this period employing the accordion: the primitive and intriguing *Music for a Temple* of 1969, which also features an electric guitar and percussion; the *Donizetti Variations* of 1969, the *Fourteen Rhythmic Studies* of 1969 and the *Double Concerto* of 1969 which calls for two accordions and small orchestra. There are further vocal works including *Another Direction*, for soprano, clarinet and piano, of 1968, to texts by James Parr in what is a translucent score; *Ode to Autumn*, for soprano, flute and piano of 1968 sets John Keats with that effortless flow of Wilson's pen, and *Bucolics*, for high voice and piano of 1968 to a text by John Clare, which that leading exponent of twentieth-century vocal repertoire, Jane Manning, highly praises in her recent book. There are also the *Three Yeats Songs*, of 1970, for soprano and piano; in fact, an untapped mine of vocal gems.

In February 1969 at the Wexford Opera Festival the Irish National Opera conducted by Hans Waldemar Rosen gave the première of *Twelfth Night*, an opera in three acts based on Herbert Moulton's adaptation of the Shakespeare play and lasting about two and a half hours. Ten soloists and an intimate orchestra ensures the enviable clarity of the texture in what is probably Wilson's greatest work to date in terms of dedication, length and consistency. It is far superior to Britten's *A Midsummer Nights Dream* completed nine years earlier in that it benefits from clarity of texture and lines, has a strong sense of communication and continuity. It is hugely enjoyable.

There are individual themes connected with the principal characters. For example, Viola's theme consists of a falling 7th which is inverted when she becomes a man!

Peter McBrien played Orsino in the opera and said:

"*Twelfth Night* was absolutely marvellous. Jim captured the play wonderfully... it contains lovely melodies in a contemporary setting... and it deserves to be performed more often."

In the following year it was staged at the Abbey Theatre, the first opera ever to be produced there.

The *Irish Songs* of 1970 appear in two versions; one for mezzo-soprano and piano, the other for soprano and orchestra. As with *A Woman Young and Old* and Humphrey Searle's *The Riverrun* the soloist needs to be an actress if adequate justice to the score is to be achieved. The second song, *City Shower*, is a case in point as is the fourth, *The Widow Malone*, which is hair-raising and impossible to forget, and the sixth song, *A Glass of Beer*, which is about two acrimonious Irish women fighting over the loan of a glass of this particular beverage. The third song, *Swallows*, is both evocative and true to life. The fifth *Sea Ritual* is simple and imbued with that individual beauty that seems to flow so effortlessly from this composer. It contrasts a

superb orchestral climax with a later vocal one. The seventh and final song, *The Black Rose*, employs the cantilena device to begin and end the setting in which the orchestra is reduced to strings alone, but what exemplary writing it is! The range of expression in this work of unequalled presence is remarkable the effects, which are not for effects' sake alone, are well-judged. It is as good an orchestral song-cycle you could hope to encounter, surpassing those of, for example, Britten.

The next four years saw the steady production of more works including *Carmen Carmeliticum* of 1971 for mezzo-soprano, chorus, piano, violin, viola and cello, to a text by St. John of the Cross. This was written to commemorate the 700th anniversary of the arrival of the Carmelites in Ireland. *Le Bateau Ivre* (1971) is another example of Wilson's highly enjoyable orchestral style; the *String Quartet no.1* of 1972 is a disappointment, according to the composer; the *Dances for a Festival* of 1973 is a curious orchestral work. Like *Music for Castletown* of 1981 it seems to be in two parts and in disparate styles, which is aurally worrying. *Dances* begins with robust energy and rhythmic vitality. There is a wonderful blend of brass with woodwind in an ensuing slow section, and a long percussion solo, with the strings taking up the excited flurry, to which first the trumpets are added, then the tremendous energy of the full orchestra. This is where the piece should have come to a conclusion. The slow music that follows, albeit of some depth, and the curious passages with its hints of pageantry and bassoon humour is too episodic to belong to a work that began with a good sense of integration. I am also undecided about *Music for Castletown* which seems to be an orchestral essay without a subject. Yet about a quarter of an hour into the work we are left with a ten-minute piece which is very fine. Both these works are pieces in two halves which stylistically do not match. The *Violin Sonata no.2* and the *Third Violin Sonata* both dating from 1972 with the *Colloquoy* and *Sonata de Valldemosa* complete the quartet of extremely successful works in this particular medium.

The *Symphony no. 2* of 1975 was written at the time a close friend of the composer was dying. Like *Dances for a Festival* and *Music for Castletown* it is in two parts which seem at odds with each other. In the case of the *Symphony no. 2* it would fare very much better if the final section, which begins with a slowish, slightly humorous passage introduced by the bassoons, appeared just before or just after the setting of Shakespeare's *Sonnet number fifty five* (which is sung by a mezzo-soprano) or if it was removed from the work altogether. As the work stands, the sonnet is immediately followed by some impressive orchestral music of cheerful confidence, celebrating life in the most persuasive musical terms. There are the Wilson trumpets and superlative high string writing only to be followed by this lightweight material. Perhaps it is biographical, recalling events of a life that is no more and proclaiming that, while life can be taken away, memories cannot be stolen. The symphony has an impressively coherent, very well-structured opening. There is some fine colour, including that supplied by the tenor saxophone, as well as brief moments of nostalgia and other moods which pervade this well-argued score. Often it is like the music of a distracted, pain-ridden soul, frustrated, angry, hurt and demoralised. There is much animation, and the Wilson thumb-print is very evident. The soloist enters with 'You shall shine more bright' and refers to 'the living record of your memory. 'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity shall you pace forth... you... dwell in lover's eyes'. This is indeed an effective and telling setting. The music is sad but neither mournful nor miserable. The robust orchestral passage that follows is nothing short of magnificent, but it is a pity about the final section!

The *Concerto for four flutes and orchestra*, of 1978, is attractive if not startling. The *Rape the Lock*, of 1978, sets Alexander Pope's story of an amorous individual who steals a lock of his beloved's hair despite the moral that one 'weighs mens' wits against the lady's hair'. It is scored for chorus and accordion which does not quite blend with the 18th-century text, the music being more satisfactory when unaccompanied. *Songs of Welcome* for soprano, tenor, guitar, piano, violin and cello to a text by Francis Ledwidge was commissioned by the Arts Council of Dublin for Queen Margrethe of Denmark's state visit to Ireland in 1978. Another dramatic work for voice and piano is the chilling *Witches' Ballad* of 1979 to a clever text by William Bell Scott. It recalls *The Widow Malone* and *Glass of Beer* from the *Irish Songs*. This is not only music but also engaging entertainment which would draw a genuine response from any audience. The *Harpichord Concerto* of 1979 does not come off; it is somewhat arid and lifeless whereas the *Symphonic Variations*, for piano and orchestra, of the following year is a robust, interesting score. If you enjoy the music for piano and orchestra of Bartok or Prokofiev you should appreciate this. It was written for the brilliant Irish pianist, Philip Martin, who is a gifted and sensitive composer in his own right.

Letters to Theo of 1982 is an opera in one act built on a twelve-note row, scored for baritone, who takes the part of the artist Vincent van Gogh, with chorus and orchestra. As the opera begins, the painter is in his room in the asylum writing a letter to his brother during a summer evening towards twilight. He is greatly disturbed and calls upon God to make his life bearable. The chorus, dressed in cheap, ill-fitting uniforms of hospital orderlies, echo extracts and quote from a sermon he is writing. He is desperate to go to Belgium to the district called the Borinage to be an evangelist. The second scene is night. Van Gogh believes he is in the Borinage; he complains about his family, who do not understand him, and tries to justify himself, but realises he is going downhill and is a caged bird. He despairs at being seen as a useless idler. To him the future is only dark. Solo voices of the chorus sing wordlessly above a radiant and light orchestral accompaniment. There follows a brief passage in which the chorus sings a 'representation of creative ecstasy.' The thirty-year-old painter believes his real work is about to begin; he speaks of his need for a woman and that God is as dead as a doornail. The contrast of soloist and chorus is always well-timed; the passage at the end of part three which describes a projected painting of the Borinage is music of supereminence. In the final part of the opera van Gogh has lost desire for marriage and children since 'love of art is the only real love'. There is an indefectible interlude for chorus and orchestra depicting winter. Van Gogh contemplates his work and death. He goes back over his old fears. His ear is bandaged; he is upset by Theo's visit and asks him to tell mother some story so that she will not worry. He epitomises his condition: 'I am wrung by enthusiasm or madness or prophecy'. His final words before he shoots himself highlight his real predicament: 'Love needs so much more than people imagine'. The final pages do have moments of dramatic musical tension but the opera obviously depends upon visual effect for maximum impact. It is a piece of theatre; its starkness and tragic overtones do not make it completely satisfactory as a mere aural presentation. It seems to me that the composer has purposely kept any personal comment out of Theo, wanting, rather, to say 'This is what happened. Make up your own mind about it.' Its television production was outstanding.

As with all of Wilson's operas they have an equalled impact on audiences. Anne Makower who produced Letters to Theo said, "The subject matter of the growing madness of Van Gogh gripped the audience and a number of people whom I met afterwards, or later, confessed that they felt emotionally shattered at the end of the evening."

Only great music can do that!

Consistency of material is a problem in the Cello Concerto of 1984. At its best it has a captivating atmosphere when the cello soliloquises and is employed to exploit its best features, including that deeply-felt singing quality; but there seems no direction. It contains some fine music but this contrasts with less worthy content.

The return to vocal music in 1985 saw the production of Emily Singing, for soprano and chamber orchestra, to a text by Emily Bronte which is another superlative example of Wilson's expertise in writing for the voice; the orchestral colour is translucent and sensual, often giving a feel of brightness and warmth. Runes for soprano and cello is a superb little masterpiece, appealing, effective, concise, infectious, delightful and Irish.

But perhaps his finest achievement to date is the two act Opera Grinning at the Devil of 1985 to a text by Elsa Gress. It is inspired by Karen Blixen of 'Out of Africa' and 'Seven Gothic Tales' fame. I quote from Poul Erik Pind's review in Opera:

It is rare nowadays for music to express heart-rending feelings, and a love story like this becomes real opera when music and text become a dramatic unity. Wilson and Gress have succeeded creating a mystical African mood and erotic tension combined with a constant underlying tragedy. Like Sheherazade, Tania (the Blixen character) tries to keep her Denys (Finch Hatton) with her by telling him tales in which they are the main characters. After Denys dies the Simorgh, mythical Persian bird of love, takes Tania into the world of poetry where she survives despite her grief.

The second act finds her meeting famous personalities like Marilyn Monroe and Arthur Miller at a cocktail party in New York given by Carson McCullers. Tania feels desolate and remembers how alive she was in her

African life with Denys. Sounds of Africa are heard, and Tania sees a vision of Denys appearing in a moon like a human brain on the backdrop. He tells her that he now knows all stories, and that even hers will end. In an apotheosis the Simorgh takes Tania to her lover. Wilson's music has an English quality in associations with mediaeval and Renaissance melodies and harmonies, and there are quotations from Handel and Mozart, music that Blixen and Denys listened to at the African farm.

John Cashmore as Denys displayed an imposing level of musical and dramatic intensity, and made every word audible. Edith Guillaume as Tania gave stature to her role, her velvet mezzo expressing heart-rendingly Tania's love and longing. A chorus of 15 singers were fantastic Masai warriors or birds in Act 1, and colourful high society guests in Act 2. I hope this opera will soon have a chance to be seen on a larger stage. It deserves it

In 1995 Wilson turned to opera again with *A Passionate Man* dealing with the life of Jonathan Swift. It was produced in the Samuel Beckett Theatre, Trinity College in 1995. The libretto is by Bruce Arnold and the opera was written in celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of St. Patrick's Hospital, Dublin, which Swift founded. Popular melodies of the time are cleverly woven into the score to represent various characters including *Lavender Blue* for Vanessa and *The Three Ravens* for Queen Anne. The composer has said that this opera can be described as a latter day *Beggar's Opera*. The famous Irish tune *Lilliburlero* also appears but does not seem to represent any character. The orchestration includes a clarinet, french horn, string quarter, piano and synthesiser. The auditorium in Trinity College is small.

*Virata* is a four act opera lasting about 150 minutes and is based on a short story by Stefan Zweig from an Oriental fable telling of a general who becomes aware of the futility of war. It dates from 1999 and has yet to be staged. It would require both extensive resources and capital to produce it. Nonetheless the composer regards it as a good piece. He told me, "I had to write it out of inner compulsion."

There is a *Third Symphony* in four movements lasting about 37 minutes. Wilson told me, "I disciplined myself to write some fast music as it has been said that I only write slow music. It is scored for a large orchestra with a substantial percussion section including a piano. There is no part for the harp. It is a craggy and intractable piece. The opening and the finale are fast. The second movement is complicated beginning with a violin solo but later the strings are interrupted by wind and percussion and each time the strings further divide until the string orchestra is in thirteen parts. The third movement is of a moderate pace and is severe both in intensity and texture. It is in the time of 4 + 3 + 2 which may not suit everyone but it does me. It is due for its première in March 2003."

He is *Trio* for two singers, an actress and five instruments which he describes as a piece of music theatre written for Denmark, the country in which his evident talents have been most widely recognised.

His previous two song-cycles for baritone have been on serious or 'gloomy' texts but *Dublin Spring* is a cheerful work.

In August 2001 he began work on his *Fifth Violin Sonata* for the brilliant Catherine Leonard.

What of this unknown man? He is a bachelor, homosexual and describes himself as apolitical and an atheist. He is a man of compassion for it was this that inspired *Letters to Theo*; a visit to the memorial at Jerusalem to children killed in the holocaust inspired *Menorah* for viola and orchestra of 1989 premiered in 1991 by Rivka Golani who enthuses about it with a crusading spirit of sincerity; the *Symphony no. 2* is also clearly written from the heart. Wilson enjoys sailing,



cooking and gardening as well as travelling. His literary interest has already been expressed; as for other composers he reveres Mozart and Schubert; makes the astute comment that Beethoven's intellect humbles him as does Berg's but Beethoven could not write for the voice whereas Berg certainly could; he suggests that Brahms's chamber music may be the best ever written; Britten is the best song-writer of the century and Ligeti is always fascinating. He singles out as an one example of 'special' modern music John Casken's Orion over Farne. He is undecided about Schonberg and Webern but does not respond to Stockhausen and some Messiaen. Wilson is a courteous man, sometimes pithy and blunt in his opinions which are always precise, displaying confidence in what he says. As to his own music he describes some of it as 'junk' although he quite enjoys talking about his work. To him public reception is much less important than the reaction of the performers. There is a lot of music being written today and it is not always judged on its merit, but often by standards of cult snobbery. If Tippett or Britten had written Grinning at the Devil exactly as Wilson has, it would be on a commercial recording within months and fawned over!

Indeed if you enjoy the music of Britten and Bax, as well as Prokofiev and Kodaly, there is much in James Wilson's output that you will equally enjoy, it not prefer. I am very glad that I badgered him for scores and tapes. There are some of his works that I could not do without.

He was made an Irish citizen in 1999 and died in a Dublin hospital on 6 August 2005 of what was later called an unusual heart problem

He was a likeable man and his works should be made known.

List of works:

Ronsard Songs	1950
Divertimento	1957
Poema Sarda	1958
Symphony No. 1	1960 rev. 1967
Après Trois Ans	1962
The Hunting of the Snark	1963
Tam O'Shanter	1965 rev. 1977
Divertimento	1965
Anna Liffey	1965
Burns Night	1965
Elegy on a favourite cat drowned in a tub of gold fishes	1965
Tom O'Bedlam	1965
A Woman Young and Old	1966 rev. 1970
Spanish Arch	1966
Jeu des Tierces	1966
A Woman Young and Old	1966
A Woman Young and Old	1966
Carrion Comfort	1966
Idle Winds	1966
The Bailey Beareth the Bell Away	1966
Three Birds	1966
Three Canticles	1966
Quintet for Accordion and Strings	1967
Horn Concerto	1967
A Canticle for Christmas	1967
A Song of Light	1967
Fourth Canticle	1967
The Pied Piper of Hamelin	1967
Colloquy	1968
Sonata for Cor Anglais and Piano	1968

Thermagistris	1968
Bucolics	1968
Ode to Autumn	1968
The Solitary Reaper	1968
Accordion Studies	ca. 1969
Double Concerto	1969
Capricci	1969
Diversion on a Theme by Handel	1969
Donizetti Variations	1969
Amoretti	1969
Another Direction	1969
Twelfth Night	1969
Sonata de Valldemosa	1970
Bagatelles	1970
Irish Songs	1970
Sixth Canticle	1970
Sweet Dancer	1970
Sweet Dancer	1970
Three Yeats Songs	1970
Three Yeats Songs	1970
Trois Vocalises	1970
When icicles hang by the wall	1970
Xanadu	1970
Le Bateau Ivre	1971
Bestiary	1971
Carmen Carmeliticum	1971
The Táin	1971
Sonata No. 2	1972
String Quartet	1972
Violin Sonata No. 3	1972
Seventh Canticle	1972
The Wax Banana	1972
Upon Silence	1972
Sonatina	1973
Dances for a Festival	1973
Missa Brevis	1973
Divisions for Four Trombones	1974
Fantasia for Solo Cello	1974
Fand	1974
Alarums and Excursions	1975
Symphony No. 2	1975
Prelude for Brass Quintet	1976
Ditto Daughter	1976
Concerto for Four Flutes and String Orchestra	1978
Les Fiançailles	1978
Nativity Ode	1978
Songs of Welcome	1978
The Rape of the Lock	1978
Epithalamion	1979
Concerto for Harpsichord and Chamber Orchestra	1979
Arlecchino	1979
Air and Angels	1979
Carol in Thanks	1979

The Windhover	1979
The Witches' Ballad	1979
Arachne	1980
Symphonic Variations	1980
The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower	1980
Duo	1981
Three Pieces for Descant Recorder and Piano	1981
Nighttown	1982
Five Preludes	1982
Variations on a French Tune	1982
Letters to Theo	1982
Plurabelle	1982
Poem by Oscar Wilde	1982
The Revenge of Truth	1982
Brass Quintet No. 1	1983
Monkey	1983
Two by Four by Two	1983
Wind Quintet	1983
Solitaire	1983
The Cat that Walked by Himself	1983
Three Playthings	1983
Concerto for Cello and Orchestra	1984
Explorations	1984
The Temptations of Saint Anthony	1985
The Temptations of Saint Anthony	1985
Breeze and Calm	1985
Music for a Mechanical Organ	1985
Donny Johnny	1985
Emily Singing	1985
Journey	1985
Runes	1985
The Little Mermaid	1985
Brass Quintet No. 2	1986
Duet for Ten	1986
Grinning at the Devil	1986
The King of the Golden River	1987 - 1992
The King of the Golden River	1987 - 1992
Angel One	1987
Ostinato	1987
The Wonderful Stone	1987
Angel Two	1988
Libberton Moonrise	1988
Shadow Play	1988
First Frost	1988
Rima	1988
Stirabout	1988
Menorah	1989
Pearl and Unicorn	1989
Boreas	1989
The Christmas Rose	1989
Wildwood	1990 rev. 1993
Undesirables	1990
Wildwood	1990

String Quartet No. 2	1991
Nine Very Small Songs	1991
The Legend of the Third Dove	1991
Three Poems by Susan Connolly	1991
For Cliodhna	1992
Animalphabet	1992
Quintet for Clarinet and Strings	1993
Sonata No. 4	1993
Concertino	1993
Keats on Keats	1993
Maze	1993
Vigil	1993
Cloud Music	1995
House of Cards	1995
Mr Dwyer's Fancy	1995
A Passionate Man	1995
Concerto 'For Sarajevo'	1996 rev. 1998
Calico Pie	1997
Sonata	1998 rev. 2001
Sonatina	1998
Concerto Giocoso	1998
Les Sylphides	1998
Aceldama	1998
Dance Pieces	1999
Grimoire	1999
Piano Trio No. 2	1999
Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra	1999
Tree and Moon	1999
The Fisherman and his Wife	1999
Virata	1999
Dublin Spring	2000
Fanfare	2001
Sonata No. 5	2001
Symphony No. 3	2001
Weathercock	2001
Capriccio	2001
Enjoying	2001
Trio	2001
Serenade	2002
String Quartet No. 3	2002
Orison	2003 - 2005
Contrariwise	2003
Chiaroscuro	2003
The Bell	2003
The Snail and the Rose Tree	2003
The Teapot	2003
Utter Nonsense	2003
Consequences	2004
Sonata	2004
Sonata No. 6	2004
Almanac	2004
Two Pieces for Bass Clarinet and Piano	2005
Stuffed Raspberries	2005

The Lion Tamer's Night Off	2005
Suite for Brass Band	No date
1985	No date
Dance Ritual	No date
Divertimento	No date
Divertimento - Finale	No date
Games	No date
Prelude to Divertimento	No date
Alla marcia	No date
Flute Sonata	No date
Easter Procession	No date
Lullaby	No date
So we'll go no more a-roving	No date
The Cat and the Moon	No date
The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo	No date
The Only Jealousy of Emer	No date
Umbrage for Orchestra and Six Music Critics	No date

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