

Charles O'Brien

The Scottish composer Charles O'Brien (1882 - 1968) graduated in music from the Universities of Oxford (Mus.Bac.) and Trinity College, Dublin (Mus.Doc.). The fourth generation of professional musicians in his family, he studied composition under Hamish MacCunn and was conductor of the Edinburgh Royal Choral Union and the Bach Choir. He was a President of the Edinburgh Society of Musicians, of which his father was a founder member. Although he became a Director of the London College of Music, and was elected an Honorary Fellow, he always lived in Edinburgh, where his professional life was spent as an organist, pianist and Director of Music at the Royal Blind School, Edinburgh.

His compositions include a symphony, first broadcast by the BBC in 1929, and two concert overtures, *Ellangowan* and *To Spring*. The former has been broadcast on many occasions, including a performance by the BBC Scottish Orchestra conducted by Andrew Davis. Other works include two trios for piano, violin and cello, a piano sonata in E minor and a sonata for clarinet and piano which was published by The Hardie Press in 1995. Again, all these pieces have been performed at various times on the BBC and at concerts in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Barcarolle is one of a suite of four pieces originally written for small orchestra in 1904 while the composer was under the tuition of Hamish MacCunn. There is a later version for studio orchestra. It was first performed by the Eastbourne and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Dan Godfrey. Since then it has been broadcast on several occasions, and was performed at a concert in the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh, in 1968.

This version for piano was made by Charles O'Brien not long before his death. The fingering is the composer's.

The manuscript of the *Barcarolle* was made available by the composer's son Sir Frederick O'Brien, who also assisted in the editorial and proofing process. The publisher also gratefully acknowledges advice given by Mark Owen.