

Mark Bebbington: Best of British Part 1

Friday May 24th

10.00am – 11.00am

Ludlow Assembly Rooms

John Ireland

Sarnia – An Island Sequence

1. *Le Catiaroc*
2. *In a May Morning*
3. *Song of the Springtides*

William Alwyn

Sonata alla Toccata

Doreen Carwithen

Sonatina

Ian Venables

Caprice

Programme shown may be changed without notice



“**Mark Bebbington** is without doubt one of Britain's finest pianists.” wrote Michel Fleury recently in *Classica*.

Internationally recognised as a champion of British music, Mark has recorded extensively for the SOMM ‘New Horizons’ label to unanimous acclaim. His last seven releases have been awarded five-star reviews in *BBC Music Magazine*.

Mark’s premiere recordings include Bax’s *Piano Concertino* coupled with Ireland’s *Piano Concerto and Legend*, and premieres of Vaughan Williams’s *Fantasia* and Mathias’s first two *Piano Concertos*. In 2017, Mark completed his Ireland and Bridge solo piano series and released a CD of Alwyn’s piano works.

Over recent seasons Mark has toured throughout Europe and the USA (both as recitalist and as soloist with some of the world’s leading orchestras), as well as the Far East and North Africa. In the UK he has performed concertos with the Royal Philharmonic and Philharmonia orchestras and the BBC Concert Orchestra. He has featured both as soloist and recitalist on BBC television and radio.

Mark studied at the Royal College of Music, where he was a recipient of numerous international awards and prizes. He later studied in Paris and Italy with the legendary Aldo Ciccolini.

Programme notes

Sarnia – John Ireland (1879-1962)

Sarnia is the ancient Roman name for Guernsey, and the pieces reflect Ireland's love and nostalgia for the island's landscape and culture. Ireland composed Sarnia: An Island Sequence in 1940-41, shortly before and after he had to leave the island due to the German occupation. The first piece, *Le Catiaroc*, is inspired by a neolithic site in Saint Saviour, Guernsey. The second piece, *In a May Morning*, depicts the beauty and joy of springtime on the island. The third piece, *Song of the Springtides*, expresses the power and mystery of the sea.

Sonata – William Alwyn (1905-1985)

William Alwyn was a British composer, known for symphonies, chamber music, opera and more than 70 film scores. He was also a prolific writer, poet, and painter. The Alwyn Piano Sonata - composed in 1956 - is full of contrasts and surprises.

Sonatina in C Major- Doreen Carwithen (1922-1985)

Doreen Carwithen was a formidable composer but largely put her own career aside for that of William Alwyn with whom she had a secret, 20-year relationship and subsequently married. She was the first woman to join the J.Arthur Rank Apprenticeship scheme in 1947 and wrote scores for over 30 films including the official film of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Her Sonatina was written for her lifelong friend, the pianist Violet Cole, in 1946.

Caprice - Ian Venables (b.1955)

Ian Venables is known for his lyrical melodies, rich harmonies, and poetic sensibility. His songs have been praised by critics and performers alike for their emotional depth and musical craftsmanship. Caprice Op.35 was commissioned by the Three Choirs Festival and received its premiere in August 2001.

Thanks to the **William Alwyn Foundation** and also to **John Ireland Trust** for their support of this concert.

