

Sarah Riskind

In Tír na nÓg

*for SSA chorus, piano,
and traditional Irish band instruments*

2025



www.sarahriskind.com

Duration: 3 min.

Sarah Riskind
In Tír na nÓg

for SSA chorus, piano, and traditional Irish band instruments (optional)

In Tír na nÓg began as an idea for one song on an album of original fiddle tunes, to be recorded with members of the traditional Irish band Turas. I decided to arrange it for chorus so that it could be part of my upcoming concert with Turas and the Eureka College choral and instrumental ensembles (a highly enjoyable collaboration we repeated after its success in 2024). Although I regularly play Irish traditional music and have benefited from studying with more experienced practitioners, I am not Irish; this is an original melody, not a folk song.

The poem by Ethna Carbery depicts a story common in Irish folklore: a young man is lured into the supernatural Celtic Otherworld (*Tír na nÓg*), where he loses all memory of his home and loved ones. Although I kept most of the poem intact, I combined Carbery's two-line stanzas into four lines each and repeated the *In Tír na nÓg* phrase four times in each chorus instead of just two.

The rhythm of the verses resembles an Irish jig or hornpipe, and in the instrumental breaks and turnarounds, I leaned more into the jig side (more eighth notes in 6/8). This piece can be performed in a variety of ways:

- All of the choral parts, just with piano (just leave out the instrumental break from E to F)
- Chorus, piano, and one or more melody instrument (in unison)
- Chorus, piano, melody instrument(s), and chord instrument(s)
- Chorus and chord instrument(s) (amplification may be needed) (cut E to F)
- Chorus, melody instrument(s), and chord instrument(s) (amplification may be needed)
- Any of those arrangements, but without all vocal harmony parts covered

Suggested instruments:

- Melody: fiddle (violin), mandolin, flute (either Irish or concert-style), tin whistle (in D), banjo, bouzouki, accordion, concertina, and others
- Chords: guitar, bouzouki, banjo, accordion, and others

The notated instrumental parts do not have to be played strictly as written. Players can choose octaves that are more comfortable, ornament and vary the melody as desired, and choose their own slurs/strumming patterns/bowings. They can learn the part from notation, or by ear as is more traditional. Instrumentalists who are inexperienced in Irish music would benefit from some YouTube listening, especially to jigs played by skilled musicians on their specific instrument!

– Sarah Riskind

About the Poet

Ethna Carbery (1864-1902), born Anna Bella Johnston, was an Irish nationalist writer, poet, and journalist from County Antrim. She took the pen name Ethna Carbery in order to distinguish herself from her husband Seumas MacManus, but tragically passed away only one year after their 1901 marriage. Her husband published her poetry collection *The Four Winds of Eirinn* after her death, followed by several other volumes of stories.

About the Composer

Sarah Riskind is a composer, choral conductor, and fiddler based in Peoria, Illinois. Many of her original works are choral settings of Jewish texts, often with string instruments, but she has written secular choral works, art songs, chamber music, and other genres (available at sarahriskind.com, Pavane Publishing, Project Encore, Swirly Music, and J. W. Pepper). Riskind is a fiddler and vocalist in the Irish band Turas, and she composes original fiddle tunes inspired by traditional Irish and New England instrumental music. In her conducting roles, she values programming diverse repertoire and building meaningful connections among singers. She is Music Director of the Baroque Artists of Champaign-Urbana, as well as a longtime faculty member and choral director at The Walden School's summer programs for creative musicians in Dublin, New Hampshire. Riskind holds degrees from University of Washington, University of Wisconsin at Madison, and Williams College.

In Tír na nÓg

Words by Ethna Carbery

Music and Arrangement by Sarah Riskind

Summer and spring go hand in hand, and in the radiant weather
Brown autumn leaves and winter snow come floating down together.
The sagans sway this way and that; the twisted fern uncloses,
The quicken-berry hides its red above the tender roses,

Chorus:

In Tír na nÓg, in Tír na nÓg.

In Tír na nÓg, in Tír na nÓg.

The blackbird lilts; the robin chirps; the linnet wearies never,
They pipe to dancing feet of Sidhe and thus shall pipe for ever.
All in a drift of apple-blooms my true love there is roaming,
He will not come although I pray from dawning until gloaming.

Chorus

The Sidhe desired my Heart's Delight, they lured him from my keeping,
He stepped within a fairy ring while all the world was sleeping.
He hath forgotten hill and glen where misty shadows gather,
The bleating of the mountain sheep, the cabin of his father.

Chorus

He wanders in a happy dream thro' scented golden hours;
He flutes, to woo a fairy love, knee deep in fairy flowers.
No memory hath he of my face, no sorrow for my sorrow,
My flax is spun, my wheel is hushed, and so I wait the morrow.

Chorus 2x

Pronunciation notes:

Tír na nÓg: "teer nah nohg" (the Celtic Otherworld)

Sidhe: "she" (the supernatural denizens Tír na nÓg, also called the Fair Folk)

Sagans: "say-gns" (a plant)

In Tír na nÓg

Ethna Carbery (1864-1902)

for SSA Chorus, piano, and traditional Irish band instruments

Sarah Riskind

Light and Lilting ♩ = 100

Fiddle/Melody Instrument(s)



Light and Lilting ♩ = 100

Piano/Chord Instrument(s)



DO

NOT

COPY

8

Fid.

A

S1.

All singers

mf

1. Sum - mer and spring go hand in hand, and

Bm D A Bm A Bm A Bm

Pno.

mp

16

S1.

in the ra-diant wea-ther Brown au-tumn leaves and win-ter snow come floa-ting down to - ge-ther. The sa-gans sway this

A A Bm A Em Bm Bm

Pno.

23

Fid.

S1. Soprano 1 *mf*

way and that; the twis-ted fern un-clo-ses, The quick-en-ber-ry hides its red a-bove the ten-der ro-ses, In

S2. Soprano 2 *mf*

In

A. Alto *mf*

In

Pno.

Bm E F#m Bm A Em Bm

30

Fid.

S1. *mf*

*Tír____ na nÓg____ in Tír____ na nÓg. In Tír____ na nÓg____ in Tír____ na nÓg.

S2.

*Tír____ na nÓg____ in Tír____ na nÓg. In Tír____ na nÓg____ in Tír____ na nÓg.

A.

*Tír____ na nÓg____ in Tír____ na nÓg. In Tír____ na nÓg____ in Tír____ na nÓg.

Pno.

mf

Bm E Em Bm D A F#m Bm Bm

*Tír na nÓg is pronounced "teer nah nohg"

NOT

COPY

*Sidhe is pronounced like the pronoun "she"

54

Fid. D

S1. *mf*
mf

S2. *mf*

A. *mf*

will not come al though I pray from daw-ning un-til gloa-ming. In *Tír____ na nÓg____ in Tír____ na nÓg. In

Bm A Em Bm D Bm E Em Bm

Pno. *m*

SAMPLE!

62

Fid. E

S1. *mf*

S2. *mf*

A. *mf*

Tír____ na nÓg____ in Tír____ na nÓg.

Tír____ na nÓg____ in Tír____ na nÓg.

Tír____ na nÓg____ in Tír____ na nÓg.

D A F#m Bm E Bm Bm A A

Pno. *mf*

NOT COPY

86

Fid.

S1.

S2.

A.

dum pum pa dai - dee dai-dee dum pum pa dai - dee dai-dee dum pum pa dai-dee dai - dee da

dum pum pa dai - dee dai-dee dum pum pa dai - dee dum pum pa dai-dee dai - dee da

Heart's De-light, theylured him from my keep-ing, He stepped with-in a fai - ry ring while all the world was sleep-ing. He

B(sus₂) F#m⁷ F#m⁷ Em⁷ F#m⁷ Cmaj⁷ B⁷(sus₄)

Pno.

NOT

COPY

93

Fid.

S1.

S2.

A.

dai-dee dai-dee dum pum pa dai-dee dai-dee dum pum pa oh

dai-dee dai-dee dum pum pa dai-dee dai-dee dum pum pa oh

hath for-got-ten hill and glen where mis - ty sha-dows ga - ther, The bleat-ing of the moun - tain sheep, the ca - bin of his

Gmaj⁷ Gmaj⁷ Em⁷ D⁹/F# G⁵ F#⁵ E⁵

Pno.

100 **[G]**

Fid. *mf*

S1. *mf*
In *Tír na nÓg, in Tír na nÓg. In Tír na nÓg, in Tír na nÓg.

S2. *mf*
In *Tír na nÓg, in Tír na nÓg, in Tír na nÓg, in Tír na nÓg.

A. *mf*
fa - ther. In *Tír na nÓg, in Tír na nÓg. In Tír na nÓg, in Tír na nÓg.

Pno. *mf*
E⁵ **[G]** Bm E Em Bm D A F#m Bm

109 **[H]**

Fid. *p*
Solo
He wan-ders in a hap-py dream thro'scen-ted gol-den ho-urs; He

S1. *pp* *Mysterious and hypnotic, perhaps breathy*
Ooh...

S2. *pp* *Mysterious and hypnotic, perhaps breathy*
Ooh...

A. *pp* *Mysterious and hypnotic, perhaps breathy*
Ooh...

Pno. *pp*
Bm Bm G F#m **[H]** Bm Bm A A

117

Solo

flutes, to woo a fai-ry love, kneedeep in fai-ry flow-ers. No mem-ory hath he of my face, no sor-row for my sor-row, My

S2.

A.

Bm A Em Bm Bm Bm E F#m

Pno.

125

Fid.

Solo

flax is spun, my wheel is hushed and so I wait the sor-row

S2.

A.

In *Tír na nÓg, in Tír na nÓg. In

Bm A Em Bm Bm E Em Bm

Pno.