



## AMERICAN CLASSICS



### Ulster Orchestra



The Ulster Orchestra is one of Northern Ireland's cultural cornerstones and since its foundation in 1966 has become one of the major symphony orchestras in the United Kingdom and Ireland. JoAnn Falletta was appointed Principal Conductor in May 2011, the orchestra's twelfth but first female and first American to be appointed to the post. The Hungarian-born violinist, Tamás Kocsis, leads the Orchestra. Northern Ireland's only professional symphony orchestra performs in front of over 100,000 people across Northern Ireland each year averaging eighty to ninety performances, including its more than forty main season concerts, lunch-time concerts, BBC invitation concerts and concerts at many regional and national venues like the National Concert Hall in Dublin and Royal Albert Hall in London. The Ulster Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the significant support it receives from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, its Principal Funder, the BBC, Belfast City Council and many of Northern Ireland's leading businesses.

### JoAnn Falletta



JoAnn Falletta serves as Music Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic and Virginia Symphony in the United States and Principal Conductor of the Ulster Orchestra in Northern Ireland. She has guest conducted over a hundred orchestras in North America, and many of the most prominent orchestras in Europe, Asia, South America and Africa and is the Principal Guest Conductor of the Phoenix Symphony and Brevard Music Center of North Carolina. Recipient of the Seaver/National Endowment for the Arts Conductors Award, winner of the Stokowski Competition, and the Toscanini, Ditson and Bruno Walter conducting awards, Falletta has also received eleven ASCAP awards and serves on the U.S. National Council on the Arts. A champion of American music, she has presented nearly five hundred works by American composers including over one hundred world premières. Her Naxos recordings include the double GRAMMY® Award-winning disc of works by John Corigliano (8.559331) and GRAMMY® nominated discs of works of Tyberg, Dohnányi, Fuchs, Schubert, Respighi, Gershwin, Hailstork and Holst. [www.joannfalletta.com](http://www.joannfalletta.com)

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John Knowles  
**PAINE**  
(1839-1906)

## Symphony No. 1

**The Tempest • As You Like It Overture**

**Ulster Orchestra • JoAnn Falletta**





## John Knowles Paine (1839-1906): Overture to Shakespeare's 'As You Like It' Shakespeare's Tempest – Symphonic Poem • Symphony No. 1

The last quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed unprecedented musical growth in the United States. Although the music composed during that time by native-born Americans (mostly trained in Europe) was almost entirely based on European models, important seeds were sown that led to an authentic American voice in the next century. It is hard to imagine a Copland, an Ives – or even a Gershwin – without the pioneering groundwork of the so-called 'Boston Six': Arthur Foote, George Chadwick, Amy H. Beach, Edward MacDowell, Horatio Parker – and the most senior of the group, John Knowles Paine.

Paine was born into a musical family on 9th January, 1839, in the coastal city of Portland, Maine. His father, Jacob, an instrument-maker and music-store owner, played a significant rôle in Portland's musical life. The young Paine studied organ, piano, harmony and counterpoint with Hermann Kotzschmar, a German immigrant and itinerant musician who had settled in Portland. In 1858 Paine went to Germany for formal music study. There he began to build a reputation as an outstanding organist (attracting the attention of Clara Schumann, who asked the young American to play some of his compositions for her). Within a year of returning home in 1861, he began teaching organ at Harvard University – and it was there that he made his most significant contribution to the development of American music.

During the early 1870s, Paine started to develop what would become the first university music curriculum in the United States. He felt passionately that *all* musicians – performers as well as composers – should be knowledgeable in music history and theory, but his position was not universally held in America at the time. In advocating his ideas Paine wrote: "When American musicians are conscious of having studied liberally with the high aim of becoming *masters* in every sense, they will have more self-respect; then all narrow and ignorant prejudices against their profession – sometimes held by quasi-cultivated men of other walks of life – will vanish, and all true lovers of art and science will recognize this worth."

Today Harvard honours his legacy with the John Knowles Paine Concert Hall, a 437-seat recital venue built in 1914 and renovated in 2011.

Paine's catalogue of works includes keyboard music, chamber pieces, songs, choruses, and an un-staged opera. His solely orchestral efforts are relatively few in number; in addition to the three pieces on this recording, they include only a second symphony, a duo-concertante for violin and cello, and two more symphonic poems: *Prelude to "Oedipus Tyrannus"* and *An Island Fantasy*.

Theodore Thomas (founder of the Chicago Symphony) conducted the first performance of Paine's *Overture to Shakespeare's 'As You Like It'* at Harvard on 21st November, 1876. It was well received locally; John Sullivan Dwight, the arbiter of musical taste in Boston (and America's first influential music critic) noted the music's "genial flow" and declared the piece "rich, varied, musical, consistent and symmetrical". By the turn of the century it had also been heard in New York and Chicago. Comprising a slow introduction followed by a brisk *Allegro* in sonata form, the work is not explicitly programmatic. It reflects the spirit of Shakespeare's comedy without specifying any characters or scenes. Its themes are tuneful and graceful, but in their solid working-out Paine also touches on the deeper currents that flow beneath all of the Bard's works.

Thomas also conducted the first performance of Paine's *Symphonic Poem: Shakespeare's Tempest*, at Steinway Hall in New York City on 2nd November, 1877. The composer, conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra, gave the première of a revised version in March 1883. For this work Paine gave himself over fully to the tradition developed by Liszt and Saint-Saëns, creating a piece in four connected movements that unambiguously evokes scenes and *dramatis personae* from the play. The opening storm, which surges dramatically with rushing strings and sombre brass, leads to a *Calm and happy scene before Prospero's cell*. Violins, doubled by flute, develop an extended melody over a tonic pedal – an idyll in ABA form followed by an interlude for woodwinds and harp

delineating the play's airy spirit, Ariel. In the third movement, *Prospero's Tale*, warm strings introduce an ardent theme that Paine builds into a processional of almost Wagnerian solemnity before Ariel's material returns. The final movement opens with a yearning *cantabile* (suggestive of Brahms) that depicts *The happy love of Ferdinand and Miranda*. Its impassioned climax is quickly dispelled by a playful bassoon motive for the grotesque Caliban. Paine eventually plays this in counterpoint with the "love theme". Brief recapitulations of Prospero's and Ariel's themes lead to a vibrant *Allegro vivace* coda combining hints of Ariel's material with a succinct but forceful development of Prospero's theme in cellos and basses.

Paine began work on his first symphony shortly after finishing the oratorio *St. Peter* in 1872, and completed it in early 1875. It was his first work for orchestra alone. Theodore Thomas, who deemed the symphony "worthy of a place in the repertoire", conducted the première in Boston on 26th January, 1876. The work was well-received, one critic noting that each movement was followed "by applause lasting several minutes... culminating at the end of the work in a storm of *bravos*." Thomas repeated the symphony in New York ten days later, and a critic reporting on the concert in *Atlantic* asserted: "Whatever anxiety or lack of entire faith one may have felt beforehand must have been removed by the very first phrase, which with its rushing bass and powerful stroke of chords (as if with some resistless hammer of Thor) proclaims at once the technical skill and boldness of design that belong only to masters of symphonic writing."

Beethoven casts a long shadow over the piece – not only in the opening rhythmic pattern of his *Symphony No. 5* (in the same key) heard often in the first movement, but also in many of the motivic devices Paine employs. Indeed, it may be Paine's reliance on these formulas that keeps the work from being a masterpiece of the first rank, but there is no gainsaying the attractiveness of his themes, the mastery of his orchestration and his assured handling of form.

The first movement, a lively *Allegro con brio* in traditional sonata form, contrasts a tempestuous opening theme (the "hammer of Thor") with a second subject (in the

relative major) that is considerably more elegant and supple. A brisk march passage concludes the exposition, and the development opens with several pastoral woodwind phrases creating a moment of relative calm in the prevailing storm. The second theme is more thickly scored when it returns in the recapitulation, and the movement concludes with a lengthy coda that reworks ideas from the development section.

The first part of the ABA scherzo is consistently propelled by the rhythmic figure established in its first measure. The dotted-note rhythm is never absent for long; it is even suggested in the accompaniment of the trio, which opens with a Schumannesque melody on clarinet, followed by other winds moving gracefully in parallel tenths. The lovely *Adagio* movement develops three themes in a well-balanced modified rondo structure: ABCABA. The noble opening idea (*molto cantando e espressivo*) evolves over a tonic pedal and is more richly scored each time it returns. The B section, begun by horn and strings, is more rhythmically active and leads to an impassioned climax for full orchestra with urgent demisemiquaver runs in the strings. Solo oboe introduces the C theme, as well as the gentle coda which recalls the initial motif.

The joyous C major finale, also in sonata form, focuses on the same dotted rhythmic figure as the scherzo. Here, Paine's orchestral mastery is especially evident, his use of winds reminiscent of Mendelssohn. The exposition is repeated, with the start of the development marked by a sudden shift to E major. A brief coda – in which the dotted rhythm is present in almost every measure – propels the work to a succinct but powerful close.

A few months after his death on 25th April, 1906, a glowing tribute to Paine appeared in the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*: "He lived for composing, and so he was a vital stimulus to his pupils. But, single-minded in his creative work, he was quick to kindle the spirit of his students. He had the kindly sense that sees the possibility rather than the reality." The possibilities he opened up – not only for his students but for all American musicians – resonate to this day.

Frank K. DeWald

