

newmusic::new Ireland

four

Journeys through contemporary music from Ireland



cmc.ie/nmni4

Message from Evonne Ferguson

Director, Contemporary Music Centre

With *new music::new Ireland four*, CMC presents an engaging collection of works from a community of artists with the courage, imagination and conviction to compose, perform and collaborate at this time and in this place.

In the past, we have presented these releases as a “snapshot” of the musical landscape of our island. This collection is more a long exposure, a travel log through the musical landscape in Ireland before, during and, we hope, after a global pandemic.

As in our previous releases, we hear music that includes a diversity of unique creative perspectives from different generations of composers from this island. Contemporary music from Ireland is, like our weather and society, always changing. Its influences are multicultural. Like our location it's at the edge, all at once pushing outwards to vast oceans of new sound and inwards to new musical territories.

To all the composers, performers and ensembles who have shared these works for inclusion on this collection and who have generously shared so many inspirational moments of music - we are grateful, we are humbled, we are all ears!

A special thank you to all the recording labels, broadcasters and organisations who have kindly agreed to their recordings being included in *new music::new Ireland four*.

CMC acknowledges the support of the Arts Council (An Chomhairle Ealaíon) through Annual Strategic Funding and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI), through the Lottery Project Funding Programme.



Waypoints

an introduction by Brendan Finan

“Riverrun” is the first word of *Finnegans Wake*. It’s possible that in choosing it, James Joyce was thinking of Heraclitus’ famous assertion: “No man ever steps into the same river twice, for it’s not the same river and he’s not the same man.” It’s certainly true that when we return to riverrun from the book’s closing words “A way a lone a last a loved a long the” it should be changed, if only because it now sits in the middle of a sentence, and we should be, if only because we find ourselves in the centre of an infinite novel.

Those words—*A Loved A Long*—are the title of **Nick Roth’s** contribution to this collection, an exploration of the closing 608 words of *Finnegans Wake* for flute and tape. It’s not Roth’s first time stepping into this river; it’s an adaptation of his recorder trio *A Way A Lone A Last*, though a very free one, allowing the flute to wander down its own associative paths. Like the text, notes and melodies appear, sometimes familiar but decontextualised or recontextualised in ways that let them take new paths, triggering moments of recognition and association.

Living through a global pandemic—particularly the beginning stages—may have given us more cause to focus on the places where we were than we have had for some long time. A world that has become

increasingly globally connected across the past century became suddenly isolated, and we were forced, one way or another, to become intimately familiar with the spaces around us. The shadow of Covid hangs over so much—even this release; a number of works here were written during periods of lockdown. **Karen Power’s** *Human Nature* uses field recordings from around the world and places them in conversation with human musicians.

Power’s is not the only work to draw on the experience of place outside Ireland.

Linda Buckley’s *Fridur* for piano and tape was conceived in and inspired by Iceland, and for all its floating, ambient tranquility, its score has a connection to the earth in the instruction to the pianist, at points of climax, to “land”.



Karen Power Photo : John Godfrey

John Buckley's *Three Louth Legends*, drawing from the ancient mythology of county Louth, shows us a landscape and a nature of a different sort (though landscapes and animals are central to many Irish legends). Explosive passages of almost improvisatory virtuosity arrive at points of tense consonance—a tension that comes because of their seeming to hang on the point of collapse (like Cú Chulainn, the hero of the story of the Brown Bull of Cooley, who ties himself to a standing stone in order to remain upright and fight to the death against the opposing Ulster army.)

There's an improvisatory spirit at work too in many of **Fergal Dowling's** works; he writes that some of his works "postpone the compositional moment until performance time." His *Double* for flute and electronics is electric in many senses: in the electricity of in-the-moment creation of sound, in the energy between the notes, in the way the sound itself is generated. And, of course, there's the ground—a musical term as well as an electrical and an earthly one. A ground bass can provide a landing point for soaring music to return to for stability, as it does in *Double*, or it can, as in **Daniel McDermott's** passacaglia-like *GRiT*, be an anchor, pulling the music to earth again and again with increasing violence.

Anselm McDonnell takes on another location from ancient myth: *Engines of Babel* offers a raucous mechanistic chaos, seeming to look as much at the relentlessness of modern industry as at the polyglottal aftermath of the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel. There's a similarly mechanistic energy in **Stephen Gardner's** *Clockwork Soldiers*, as well as a similarly pictorial attitude, with staccato piano melodies butting up against pizzicato strings or long chords, sometimes not quite in sync, like the vibrating stop-starts of the namesake toys.



Stephen Gardner

Music, like almost all human labour, is collaborative and social, and can explore the intimate geography of interpersonal relationships as much as the realms of earth and myth. **Sebastian Adams** has professed an interest in “constant extreme jumps in texture.” His organ work here, *2019.7*, written for his father, has rapid passages halted by solid walls of chords, eventually combining though remaining distinct, like a pair of immiscible fluids swirled together.

Neil O’Connor’s *Bog Braon* examines motherhood more abstractly, low strings and electronics underpinning a lullaby melody fragmented and placed against a shimmering spectral backdrop. **Piers Hellawell’s** contribution to the cellist Robert Irvine’s “Songs and Lullabies” project, *A Frieze and a Litany*, is similarly lyrical; a plaintive series of melodies finding their way to earth.

If these works show us anything of the safety of home, **Seán Clancy’s** *Fan* suggests something of its sorrow, built as it is on the sounds of fans—such a mundane object—across three generations of the composer’s family, from his son’s to his dying father’s. It’s worth remembering that the word “mundane” comes from the Latin word for “earthly,” and that the earthly is extraordinary from the right perspective.

Rhona Clarke’s *Seen From Above* is inspired by Edward Burtynsky’s photographs of landscapes often marred or altered by human activity. The resulting soundscapes are as beautiful as they are fragile, and there’s an ambiguity to the mood in each movement.

Deirdre McKay’s glistening choral setting of Samuel Beckett’s *sable qui glisse* explores the connection between the physical world and the internal. **Judith Ring** also summons a conceptual landscape in *Wildwood*. Night falls slowly across the work’s five sections, though the last, “Invisible Scamper,” gives us something more than the peaceful stillness of night music; nature is always alive and always active. Ring is an environmentalist, and while that is not on explicit display here, her connection to nature is.



Sebastian Adams Photo: Daryl Feehelly

Nina Simone's "*Wild is the Wind*." provides a lens for a kaleidoscopic fragmentation by **Ian Wilson**. They are very different works on many levels, although they share a lugubrious pensiveness. When the famous hook appears three-quarters of the way through, it is lonely and full of longing.



Amy Rooney

No such definitive statement is to be found in **Amy Rooney's** *IX*, which draws on Beethoven's ninth symphony but with enough of a turn to its ideas that attention is needed to bring them to the surface. There's the dropping octave from the second movement (now a dropping seventh) and the slowly building chord from the third. The Ode to Joy is in there too, though in a form that never quite gets its strength up to a full run.

It's rare that a compilation album allows a return to a place already visited. **Roger Doyle's** two-volume "*Suite of Affections*" allows that chance, treading the same land as Nick Roth's *A Loved A Long* as a setting of numerous texts from *Finnegans Wake*. *And Can It Be* closes the album, once again drawing on the last words of the book, setting slightly more than Roth (the final 671 words). But if this is the same place then it's a very different perspective, keeping the words in the foreground, a concrete setting rather than an improvisatory interpretation, with all the transcendence and sentimentality of the text.

A collection like this can be a snapshot, or it can be a map. Here we see the landscape of Irish contemporary music. Like any map, it makes choices about which points of interest to include, and like any map, we can choose how (or even whether) to follow it. Which destinations to explore further, which ones to revisit. On a map, you can trace the outline of a larger journey. A good map can guide you far, can give you an impression of the terrain. A very good map is an invitation, coaxing you to step once again into the riverrun.

*Brendan Finan is a writer from Meath. His work has appeared in several publications, including the **Journal of Music** and **VAN Magazine**.*

DISC ONE

- | | | |
|------|--|-------|
| 1. | Nick Roth: <i>A Loved A Long</i> (2017)
<i>Lina Andonovska (flute)</i> | 5:57 |
| 2. | Sebastian Adams: <i>2019.7</i> (2019)
<i>David Adams (organ)</i> | 7:41 |
| 3-4. | Karen Power: <i>Amazonian Frogs & Bats of Namibia</i>
from <i>Human Nature</i> (2020), <i>Seth Josel (electric guitar)</i> ,
track 3; <i>John Godfrey (electric guitar, electronics)</i> , track 4 | 6:03 |
| 5. | Piers Hellawell: <i>A Frieze And A Litany</i> (2015)
<i>Paul Watkins (cello)</i> | 4:28 |
| 6. | John Buckley: <i>The Brown Bull of Cooley</i> from
<i>Three Louth Legends</i> (2020), <i>Robert Finegan (saxophones)</i> | 2:50 |
| 7. | Amy Rooney: <i>IX</i> (2019)
<i>Ulster Orchestra, conductor Jac van Steen</i> | 4:24 |
| 8. | Anselm McDonnell: <i>Engines of Babel</i> (2019)
<i>Crash Ensemble</i> | 7:43 |
| 9. | Linda Buckley: <i>Fridur</i> (2015)
<i>Isabelle O'Connell (piano)</i> | 12:03 |
| 10. | Deirdre McKay: <i>sable qui glisse</i> (2019)
<i>Chamber Choir Ireland, conductor Grete Pedersen</i> | 7:14 |
| 11. | Neil O'Connor: <i>Bog Braon</i> (2020)
<i>Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh (vocals)</i> , <i>Kate Ellis (cello)</i> ,
<i>Caimin Gilmore (double bass)</i> , <i>Neil O'Connor (electronics)</i> | 7:50 |

Total 66:12

DISC TWO

- | | | |
|-------|--|-------|
| 1. | Daniel McDermott: <i>GRiT</i> (2016)
<i>Crash Ensemble</i> | 7:18 |
| 2. | Judith Ring: <i>Invisible Scamper</i> from <i>WILDWOOD</i> (2022)
<i>Martin Johnson (cello)</i> | 4:04 |
| 3-5. | Rhona Clarke: <i>Seen from Above</i> (2019)
<i>Adam Walker (flute)</i> , <i>Hélène Clément (viola)</i> , <i>Agnès Clément (harp)</i> | 13:38 |
| 6. | Fergal Dowling: <i>Double</i> (2021)
<i>Richard Craig (flute)</i> , <i>Fergal Dowling (electronics)</i> | 8:00 |
| 7. | Stephen Gardner: <i>Clockwork Soldiers</i> (2018)
<i>Martin Pavlov (flute)</i> , <i>Rossen Idealov (clarinet)</i> , <i>Sara Panosyan (violin)</i> ,
<i>Maria Vasileva (cello)</i> , <i>Bogdan Ivanov (piano)</i> | 9:41 |
| 8. | Ian Wilson: <i>Wild is the Wind</i> (2018)
<i>Gareth Davis (bass clarinet)</i> | 11:08 |
| 9-10. | Seán Clancy: <i>'Sigh'</i> and <i>'Fan'</i> from <i>Inventions & Canons</i> (2017-21) | 9:16 |
| 11. | Roger Doyle: <i>And Can it Be</i> from <i>Finnegans Wake -
Suite Of Affections</i> (2021)
<i>Roger Doyle (electronics)</i> , <i>Olwen Fouéré (spoken text)</i> | 6:49 |

Total 69:56

DISC ONE

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four



Kate Ellis



Ulster Orchestra



Chamber Choir Ireland



Robert Finegan



Anselm McDonnell



Linda Buckley



Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh



Deirdre McKay

Photo: Tony Carragher



1. Nick Roth (b. 1982)

A Loved A Long (2017)

Lina Andonovska (flutes)

Originally released on *A Way A Lone A Last* (Diatribes Records, 2020)

© Diatribe Records, Dublin

"Commissioned by the dlr LexIcon and composed for flautist Lina Andonovska, 'A Loved A Long' is a solo adaptation with tape and flamenco footwork of 'A Way A Lone A Last' (2015) for recorder trio.

The piece is an interpretation of the last six hundred and eight words of James Joyce's 'Finnegans Wake' (Faber & Faber, London, 1939) from 'Imlamaya' to 'a loved a long the', in so much as 'the wake' can ever really end, its cyclical form a perpetual cyclum aquavocum, forever writing the river Anna Livia out to the Sea to return again, 'riverrun.'

"My work seeks the liberation of improvisation from composition, the poetic syntax of philosophical enquiry, and the function of music as translative epistemology."

Nick Roth is a saxophonist, composer, producer and educator. A curious predisposition and a steadfast refusal to accept the existence of boundaries between the real and the imaginary has led to collaborations with an array of international performers, composers, choreographers, visual artists, poets, sculptors, directors, festivals and ensembles. Often engaging in conversation with scientists from such diverse fields as mathematical biology, astrophysics, forest canopy ecology, orchidology, quantum loop gravity or hydrology, his work is an investigation into how we can come to know through the art of music. Simultaneously subsumed by an insatiable appetite for literature, many of his compositions explore the symbiotic resonance of language as sound and symbol.

He is artistic director of the Yurodny Ensemble, a co-director of Unreal Cities, and a partner at Diatribe Records, Ireland's leading independent record label for new music.

He has served as artist-in-residence at institutions including the European Space Agency (ESTEC), California Academy of Sciences (CalAcademy), dlr LexIcon, Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris (CCI), and the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA). His work is represented by the Contemporary Music Centre and supported by Music Network's Music Capital Scheme, funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

cmc.ie/composers/nick-roth

nickrothmusic.com

Photo: Miriam Kaczor



2. Sebastian Adams (b. 1991)

2019.7 (2019)

David Adams (organ)

Recorded 18 June 2020, Pipeworks Festival, St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin

© Sebastian Adams

"This is part of a set of pieces I wrote that alternate structural blocks very strictly, using very systematic structural rules which were defined before I composed the piece. The point of working that way was to limit my decision-making to material only once I got to the composition stage. In this piece, gleaming, fun toccata material alternates with totally static beating chords, the two working on opposite time scales and following different harmonic trajectories. As the piece progresses, it tries to confuse the listener about whether they are hearing structural blocks of music or scraps of motivic material. The piece was commissioned by my parents and written for my father to perform."

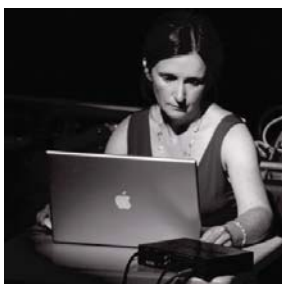
Sebastian Adams is an Irish composer, performer and artistic director with a broad practice centring on conceptual music. Recent projects include a string quartet performing in the sea as the tide rises around them. In 2012 he founded Kirkos, an experimental music ensemble which currently runs one of Dublin's only DIY music venues.

He has been widely commissioned within Ireland and performed abroad in places including Paris, Montreal, Vienna, Cologne, Potsdam, Antwerp and Görlitz. He was Composer-in-Residence for RTÉ lyric FM in 2016/17 and represented Ireland in the International Rostrum of Composers in 2017. As a performer, Sebastian Adams has created solo projects, premiered many chamber and solo works for viola, and enjoys working closely with composers on their music. He also occasionally performs early music on viola and gamba. He studied in Dublin with Kevin O'Connell and Jonathan Nangle, and in Vienna with Karlheinz Essl, and completed the IRCAM Cursus programme in Paris in 2022.

cmc.ie/composers/sebastian-adams

sebastianadams.net

Photo: John Godfrey



3-4. Karen Power (b. 1977)

Amazonian Frogs & Bats of Namibia from *Human Nature* (2020)

Seth Josel (electric guitar), track 3; John Godfrey

(electric guitar, electronics), track 4

Originally released on *Human Nature* (2020)

© Karen Power

“‘human nature’ (2020) is a set of 18 new compositions which are tied together through the singular concept of pairing human with nature: one musician with one un-processed field recording. Here we hear numbers 7 and 8 from the series.

Field recordings are sonic ‘snapshots’ of real-life events that adhere to their own time, rhythm, harmony, pacing and micro/macrostructure. They originate outside of any ‘musically constructed world’, but that is not to say that they do not contain ‘musical’ elements. Over many years of composing and listening/recording, I have focused on hearing the many connections between our world’s naturally occurring sonic events and our more constructed musical systems. In these two short duets, I make room for dialogue by removing most of the background for both parties. These pieces were created, performed and recorded during the 2020 Covid 19 Pandemic lockdown.”

“Listening to environments throughout the world and questioning how we hear everyday sounds lies at the core of my practice. Through composed field recordings paired with different instrumental ensembles, my work aims to bring humans and nature closer and to re-establish a connection and respect for our planet. Many of my compositions are devised to establish an active listening environment, which is shared between all during a performance. Since 2014, I have been developing new types of aural scores and parts as alternate methods of communication with performers within the context of working with sounds from outside the Western Art Tradition.”

cmc.ie/composers/karen-power

karenpower.ie



5. Piers Hellawell (b. 1956)

A Frieze And A Litany (2015)

Paul Watkins (cello)

Recorded on 29 March 2019, Harty Room, QUB. Engineer Chris Corrigan

© Piers Hellawell

"This work for solo cello was requested by Scottish cellist Robert Irvine in 2015 for his 'Songs and Lullabies' project. It was premiered by him at Sounds Festival, Aberdeen, Scotland the following year.

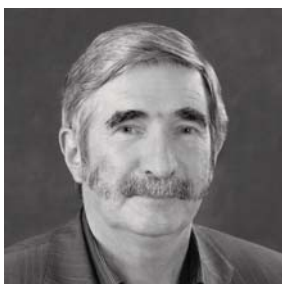
The title comes from the poem 'Man in Assynt' by Scottish poet Norman McCaig, his reflection on the intrusion of man into the primeval and undoctored landscape of North-west Scotland. There are in fact two pieces, highly contrasted: the first takes a chord idea and descends, clutching it, into the cello's low reaches; the second unfolds a melodic line, also descending to the murky region of percussive noises – descending twice, with its second part a variation on the first. While many avant-garde cello pieces have tended to explore the diversity of things that this most versatile of instruments can do, this work concentrates upon the two best established of these – chord and line."

"For me, music is not about evoking, or expressing non-musical things – yet its interior events may remind us, distantly, of absolutely anything in our consciousness."

Piers Hellawell's work has been performed around the world by artists such as the London Symphony Orchestra, Håkan Hardenberger, Philharmonia Orchestra and the Hilliard Ensemble. The Delphian CD *Airs, Waters* in 2012 was hailed as "gorgeously impassioned work ... a rich kaleidoscope of inspired creativity". 2016 saw *Wild Flow* at the BBC Proms; this and the trio *Up By The Roots* - with poet Sinéad Morrissey - appeared on another Delphian disc, *Up By The Roots*, listed among the 2020 Sunday Times CDs of the Year. His music is published by Peters Edition.

cmc.ie/composers/piers-hellawell
piershellawell.com

Photo: Edmund Ross



6. John Buckley (b. 1951)

The Brown Bull of Cooley from *Three Louth Legends* (2020)

Robert Finegan (saxophones)

Recorded on 20 August 2021 in SARC, Belfast. Engineer Chris Corrigan

© John Buckley/ Robert Finegan

“The Brown Bull of Cooley’ is the third movement of ‘Three Louth Legends’ for multiple saxophones, the other two movements being ‘The Salmon of Knowledge’, and ‘Cuchulainn and Ferdia’. The work was composed in 2020 for the saxophonist, Robert Finegan, who gave the first performance in September 2021 in Dublin as part of CMC and Kirkos Ensemble’s Culture Night event. The piece is composed for multiple alto and baritone saxophones. In places, up to seven layers have been pre-recorded and are relayed over speakers. Against this, the player performs live on both alto and baritone saxophones. The piece sets out to exploit the virtuosic possibilities of the modern saxophone.

In many respects, Louth is the Irish land of legend. The mythical brown bull of Cooley was the largest and fiercest in Ireland and was at the centre of the legendary Táin or cattle raid of Cooley. ‘The Brown Bull of Cooley’ is composed for three baritone saxophones, which superimpose virtuoso figurations, gradually increasing in density and intensity. ‘Three Louth Legends’ is dedicated to Robert Finegan, who comes from County Louth.”

“My compositions are concerned with movement and stillness; with explosive energy and reflective lyricism; with the play of sound and time.”

Born in Templeglantine, Co. Limerick in 1951, John Buckley studied flute with Doris Keogh and composition with James Wilson, Alun Hoddinott and John Cage. Buckley’s output now exceeds 130 works, which have been performed in over fifty countries worldwide and have been issued on over twenty CDs. His music has been recorded on the Anew, Altarus, Black Box, Marco Polo, Lyric FM, Atoll, Celestial Harmonies, Diatribe, Hedone, and Métier labels.

He has made numerous broadcasts on music and music education for RTÉ and Lyric FM. He has been awarded both a PhD and a DMus by the National University of Ireland. A monograph on his life and work *Constellations: The Life and Music of John Buckley* by Benjamin Dwyer was published in May 2011 by Carysfort Press.

He is a member of Aosdána, Ireland’s state-sponsored academy of creative artists and was senior lecturer at St Patrick’s College, Dublin City University from 2001 to 2017.

cmc.ie/composers/john-buckley
johnbuckleycomposer.com



7. Amy Rooney (b. 1983)

IX (2019)

Ulster Orchestra, conductor Jac van Steen

Recorded on 1 November 2021 at the Ulster Hall, Belfast.

Audio Supervisor John Benson. Producer Graeme Stewart.

© BBC. Released by arrangement with BBC Studios

"The piece was written in response to the stimulus of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, with the title IX making reference to this source of inspiration. The opening section alternates between a brass fanfare and a percussive string pizzicato figuration; these are initially presented in clearly differentiated blocks which begin to overlap as the piece progresses. The calmer and more unified middle section presents fragmented motifs derived from the 'Ode to Joy' theme. This is then interpolated into a final section merging the three main musical ideas, presented in various guises."

"At the heart of my writing is a consideration of the relationship between composer, score and performer; traditional boundaries are reconceptualized with each work, with a focus on co-creativity."

Amy Rooney is a composer from Co. Down. She read music at Queen's University Belfast, where she completed a PhD in Composition. Her preference is for music which involves some degree of co-creativity; this can present itself through an interactive score, where various decisions assigned to the player produce music that is nuanced, natural and flexible. In the words of Berio, when discussing his Sequenza I, she wants the player to "wear the music as a dress, not as a straitjacket." Her works seek to determine how levels of dialogic interaction can be modified to best serve her compositional aesthetic.

cmc.ie/composers/amy-rooney

Photo: Laura Sheeran



8. Anselm McDonnell (b. 1994)

Engines of Babel (2019)

Crash Ensemble

Recorded live on 3 March 2019, National Concert Hall, Dublin

© Crash Ensemble

"Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.' And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the LORD said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.' So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth." Genesis 11:4-9

"McDonnell's music is not always an easy listen, and perhaps the contrasts and complexities that it contains are a musical reflection of the multi-layered nature of what it means to be a composer in a community as complex as Northern Ireland."

- Robert Hugill

Anselm McDonnell is an Irish/Welsh composer from Belfast. His music is characterised by storytelling, the combination of melodic fragments with noise elements, and improvisatory energy that stems from his background as a guitarist. His body of work includes compositions for orchestra, choir, chamber ensembles, soloists, and electronics. A keen collaborator, he often works with artists from other disciplines: filmmakers, dancers, theologians, poets, lighting designers, and actors.

cmc.ie/composers/anselm-mcdonnell

anselmguitar.co.uk

Photo: Shane Scollard



9. Linda Buckley (b. 1979)

Fridur (2015)

Isabelle O'Connell (piano)

Originally released on *From Ocean's Floor* (NMC Recordings, 2020)

© NMC

"The genesis for 'Fridur' began during a stay in Iceland in 2014, with much of the harmony and atmosphere for the piece created in a wooden cabin overlooking the great expanse of Lake Laugarvatn, and volcano Mount Hekla. At the time, I couldn't put into words the feeling I had when writing it, but there was a sense of calm and peace (in Icelandic, 'fridur') and an almost panoramic wish to widen the music, to open it out - just like the vast landscape and beauty before me. I have long admired the dynamic interpretations and energy of Isabelle O'Connell's piano performances, and feel fortunate to work with her on this piece."

"It's about tracing the journey of shifting energies and sound worlds, creating light and dark, shade and nuance. I love to explore the distinction between acoustic and electronic, playing with aural illusion."

Linda Buckley has written extensively for orchestra (BBC Symphony Orchestra, RTÉ NSO), with an interest in merging her classical training with the worlds of post-punk, folk and electronica. She has composed for film including *Nothing Compares*, a documentary on Sinéad O'Connor co-composed with Irene Buckley, Pat Collins' *Henry Glassie: Field Work*, and Tadhg O'Sullivan *To The Moon*. Recent collaborations include work with experimental folk duo Anna & Elizabeth, writer Doireann Ní Ghríofa and Crash Ensemble. In 2020 her album *From Ocean's Floor* was released, featured by Iggy Pop on BBC Radio 6 as "beautiful music - here is somebody really special." She was elected to Aosdána in 2021.

cmc.ie/composers/linda-buckley

lindabuckley.org

Photo: Rory Moore



10. Deirdre McKay (b. 1972)

sable qui glisse (2019)

Chamber Choir Ireland, conductor Grete Pedersen

Recorded live on 3 March 2019, New Music Dublin

© Chamber Choir Ireland

"This piece was conceived as a partner work to an earlier commission from the choir, setting Beckett's 'Dieppe'. There's a handful of Beckett's poems from this period which catch the breath. The shifting sands, a direct address to the transience of the passing moment 'cher instant je te vois', all shot through the prism of a damp, natural world of sea and rain, shingle and mist: an outward-looking lens staring back into the internal. Commissioned by New Music Dublin for premiere by Chamber Choir Ireland, conducted by Grete Pedersen. The text used with kind permission of the Beckett Estate."

Samuel Beckett (c.1947)

*je suis ce cours de sable qui glisse
entre le galet et la dune
la pluie d'été pleut sur ma vie
sur moi ma vie qui me fuit me poursuit
et finira le jour de son commencement*

*cher instant je te vois
dans ce rideau de brume qui recule
où je n'aurai plus à fouler ces longs seuils mouvants
et vivrai le temps d'une porte
qui s'ouvre et se referme*

(Beckett's translation :)

*my way is in the sand flowing
between the shingle and the dune
the summer rain rains on my life
on me my life harrying fleeing
to its beginning to its end*

*my peace is there in the receding mist
when I may cease from treading these
long shifting thresholds
and live the space of a door
that opens and shuts*

"Exceptionally imaginative in the sound world she creates..." , Irish Examiner

From rural County Down, Deirdre McKay's work has been featured at London's Southbank, Wigmore Hall, Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam, National Sawdust, Brooklyn, Symphony Space and Carnegie Hall, New York. Awards include a Paul Hamlyn Composer Award, London, and an Arts Council of Northern Ireland Major Individual Artist Award. Commissions and performances include works for Northern Ireland Opera, State Choir Latvija for Louth Contemporary Music, Chamber Choir Ireland, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, BBC Singers, Boston Firebird Ensemble, RTÉ Con Tempo, Vanbrugh and Vertavo string quartets, pianists Andrew Zolinsky and Antti Siirala, Chloë Hanslip & Danny Driver, Darragh Morgan & Mary Dullea, Clíona Doris, Concorde and the Crash Ensemble. Her music has been broadcast by BBC Radio 3, RTÉ, New York's WNYC and WQXR.

Photo: Leon Giblin



11. Neil O'Connor (b. 1979)

Bog Braon (2020)

Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh (vocals), Kate Ellis (cello),
Caimin Gilmore (double bass), Neil O'Connor (electronics)

© Recorded in 2020 at National Concert Hall, Dublin.

"Lullabies and femininity come together through the biological role of child-bearer, and the societal role of caregiver to the extent that femininity and motherhood are often embedded into and implicit within lullaby singing. These attributes strongly support the assumption that lullabies are traditionally a form of feminine practice and narrative discourse. 'Bog Braon' is such a traditional Irish lullaby, sung by Sean Nós singer, Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh. Both the string players react to the motifs on the graphical score while the electronics are spectral reconstructions of Muireann's vocal phrases."

"As a composer, I am concerned with 'Textuality' (interactivity, pre-determined, linear) and 'Interactivity' (highly autonomous systems) and much of my work fits within a continuum between these two extremes, hosting a combination of fusion, conflict, continuity and contrast. Electronic and acoustic sounds are articulated through processing and compositional processes such as the acceleration/deceleration of tempo and the increasing/decreasing of density are a large part of my approach."

Composer and performer Neil O'Connor has been involved in experimental & electro-acoustic music for the past two decades and has performed in Ireland, Europe, Australia, Asia and the US. A graduate of Trinity College, Dublin (M.Litt/PhD Electroacoustic Music), his work has been shown and performed at MOMA, New York, IRCAM, Institute of Contemporary Art, London and he has held residencies at the Massachusetts Museum of Modern Art and EMS – Swedish Institute of Electro-Acoustic Music, Stockholm. He has worked and collaborated with members of the Crash Ensemble, Phillip Glass Ensemble, the Glenn Branca Ensemble, Bang On a Can Ensemble and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra. His electroacoustic works have won awards and mentions at Noroit-Léonce Petitot (Arras, France), Euphonie D'Or des Concours International de Musique Electroacoustique (France) and Musica Nova Electroacoustic Music Competition, (Czech Republic).

cmc.ie/composers/neil-oconnor
neiloconnor.org

DISC TWO

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four



Roger Doyle



Fergal Dowling



Ian Wilson



Agnès Clément



Judith Ring

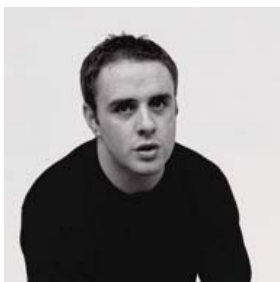


Martin Johnson



Richard Craig

Photo: Sophie Murphy



1. Daniel McDermott (b. 1985)

GRiT (2016)

Crash Ensemble

Recorded live on 22 March 2016, National Concert Hall, Dublin

© Crash Ensemble

"GRiT uses three simple process-driven methods to develop the compositional material. Using reduction, imitation and repetition, the angular rhythmic and spikey musical ideas that open the piece are pushed into ever more unpredictable contortions with ever-increasing intensity as the piece develops. This development occurs over a violent basso continuo in the piano, which at times supports the other instruments and at other times violently disrupts them. As the piece evolves, the material is always changing, yet somehow the same, somehow more intense, tighter, louder and chaotic. This generates a strong propulsive sense of time as the piece moves relentlessly forward before it collapses in on itself and dissolves into a more sustained, ambient sound world. Here a sense of dissolution is created that contrasts with the rhythmic language of the opening and the temporality slows down. GRiT is an acronym for the composition's ideas: grinding, relentless, intense, and temporal."

"Composition is searching for the hidden 'butterfly' within all the superfluous conscious patterns that recur for me. This butterfly is the answer to the compositional question, it is the main idea, worthy of expansion and form."

Daniel McDermott is an Irish musician, composer, songwriter and producer. His music fuses elements of jazz, classical, ambient, techno, minimalism and electronica. He studied music at Dundalk Institute of Technology, Queen's University Belfast and Trinity College Dublin. His output includes electronica albums, remixes, film music and contemporary classical pieces. Awards include the IMRO music award and the West Cork Chamber music award, amongst others. His work has been performed by Crash Ensemble, RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra and Britten Sinfonia, among others. He has also performed and toured as a solo electronic artist and with a band.

cmc.ie/composers/daniel-mcdermott
danielmcdermottmusic.com

Photo: Sébastien Molines



2. Judith Ring (b. 1976)

Invisible Scamper from *WILDWOOD* (2022)

Martin Johnson (cello)

Originally released on *WILDWOOD* (2020)

© Judith Ring

“‘WILDWOOD’ is a 5-piece suite for solo cello composed for and performed by Martin Johnson. Released as an EP in 2022, each piece takes you on an imaginary journey through the woods as the light fades to darkness, reflecting the moods and emotions a listener might feel while wandering alone in a forest as night approaches. ‘Invisible Scamper’ is the final piece of the suite and encompasses the feeling of hearing animals scampering through the forest in the dead of night.”

“To stir the imagination by evoking rich images and colours while instilling a sense of timelessness is what I aim to achieve. Music should awaken emotions and unexpected feelings through the stimulation of our aural senses, leading the listener into a space of new and enchanted pleasures.”

Judith Ring has been writing music for over 20 years and has composed pieces for major contemporary music ensembles and soloists specialising in close collaboration and improvisation. Her debut album *What Was* was released on Ergodos records in 2014 followed by the self-released *Ring Lieder* in 2017. Recent works include a string quartet, a choral piece and a piece for orchestra. She has a PhD in composition from the University of York and a Masters in Music and Media Technologies from Trinity College Dublin.

cmc.ie/composers/judith-ring
judithring.com

Photo: Frances Marshall



3-5. Rhona Clarke (b. 1958)

Seen from Above (2019)

Adam Walker (flute), Hélène Clément (viola) Agnès Clément (harp)

Recorded live on 23 February 2020 at the Belfast Music Society International Festival of Chamber Music at the Great Hall, Queen's University, Belfast.

Audio Supervisor John Benson. Producer Graeme Stewart.

© BBC. Released by arrangement with BBC Studios

“‘Seen From Above’ draws on ideas of nature, distance and perception. The panoramic landscapes of Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky provided the initial inspiration for this piece. Burtynsky’s work, often shot using drones, shows how nature has been altered by human industry. At first glance, images appear like large-scale abstract paintings, but on closer inspection, they reveal disturbing aspects of man’s exploitation of nature.

The music does not seek to imitate Burtynsky’s images; rather, it reflects on the idea of the idealistic, the innocent, the distant view, which will be undermined by uncomfortable realities on the ground. In the first movement, the harp creates a sense of landscape over which the flute and viola move independently. The second movement uses the ‘Dies Irae’ theme, quoted by many composers throughout history to depict death and corruption. The third movement is more hopeful and optimistic, reflecting on the wonder and power of nature.”

“The traditions and practices of Western music, from the chant of the middle ages onwards remains to be drawn upon to invent for the contemporary ear”.

Rhona Clarke is a Dublin-based composer and a former associate professor at DCU. Her output includes choral, chamber, orchestral and electronic works and she has received multiple commissions and awards. Her work has been performed and broadcast throughout Ireland and worldwide. Clarke’s chamber music forms the greater part of her oeuvre and includes four piano trios and four string quartets. As well as the many pieces on compilation albums, two portrait CDs of her work have been recorded on the Métier label: *A Different Game*, with performances by the Fidelio Trio, and *Sempiternam* performed by State Choir LATVIJA. Rhona Clarke is a member of Aosdána, Ireland’s affiliation of creative artists.

cmc.ie/composers/rhona-clarke
rhonaclarke.com



6. Fergal Dowling (b. 1965)

Double (2021)

Richard Craig (flute), Fergal Dowling (electronics)

Recorded on 23 April 2022, Edinburgh University

© CMC

“‘Double’ (for flute and electronics) uses anticipatory score following and generative computer techniques to expand on the idea of a ‘double’, both in the sense of the Baroque variation form and in the literal sense of an electronic ‘double’. The work unfolds in a series of variations and interaction types, which vary in thematic treatment, instrumental gesture and computer response. The formal plan alternates irregular repeating figures fluctuating around tonal centres with widely leaping variations on a chromatic ‘ground’. The score following techniques triggers generative computer responses to reveal progressively more elaborate interactions. ‘Double’ was developed in collaboration with Richard Craig and is part of a series of works (‘Fake’, ‘Everything is Real’, ‘Everything is an Illusion’) treating the concept of illusion.”

“My compositions aim at creating a strong sense of spatial presence, while at the same time playing on the relationship and sense of illusion created between acoustic and electronic forces.”

Fergal Dowling’s works combine acoustic and electronic forces in concentrated forms for soloists and chamber ensembles, using technology to critically consider the relationship between live and digital music. He studied at Trinity College Dublin (BMus, 2000, MLitt, 2002), the University of York (PhD, 2006), and attended Darmstadt Summer Courses and IRCAM academies. He was awarded the Elizabeth Maconchy Composition Fellowship (2002), Arts Council Bursaries (2015, 2017) and Commissions (2017, 2019, 2021). His works have been performed by Zubin Kanga, Richard Craig, Xenia Pestova, Garth Knox, Splinter Reeds (USA), Loadbang (USA), Concorde (Ireland), and others. He co-founded Dublin Sound Lab (2008) and Music Current Festival (2016).

cmc.ie/composers/fergal-dowling

fergaldowling.com



7. Stephen Gardner (b. 1958)

Clockwork Soldiers (2018)

Martin Pavlov (flute), Rossen Idealov (clarinet), Sara Panosyan (violin),
Maria Vasileva (cello), Bogdan Ivanov (piano)

Recorded live on 6 April 2019 at the pplANISSIMO Festival, Bulgaria

© pplANISSIMO Festival

“‘Clockwork Soldiers’ was written for pplANISSIMO Festival, Sofia, as part of a portrait concert, in 2019. I saw a short film which featured clockwork soldiers. Music immediately sprang to mind. I tried to capture the peculiar movement of the ‘soldiers’ in different ways. There are many recurring themes, reflecting certain gestures. As the work progresses, the clockwork soldiers morph into real ones, culminating in a Grand Guignol, which has echoes of Bulgaria’s repressive nature under USSR control. This work is technically demanding, and the ensemble chosen for this performance is made up of superb musicians. Their playing helped to generate the energy, rhythmic propulsion and drive required. Many thanks to Michael Forbes, Irish Ambassador to Bulgaria, for helping to facilitate this performance.”

“I know what I like, and I like what I know. Getting better in your wardrobe. Stepping one beyond your show.”

Stephen Gardner studied music at the Universities of Ulster and Wales from 1984 to 1990. To date, he has composed 12 works for orchestra. A CD of three of these works was released to critical acclaim by RTÉ in 2013. A key to the development of his ensemble writing was the relationship established with Concorde, directed by Jane O’Leary, resulting in seven works. Other works include those for choir, electronic and solo performers, and recent works include *Deliverance* for orchestra, which was premiered by RTÉ Concert Orchestra at New Music Dublin 2022. In the past few years, he has taken an interest in collaborative works, where pieces are developed with ensembles over a period of several months.

cmc.ie/composers/stephen-gardner

Photo: Darko Srećković



8. Ian Wilson (b. 1964)

Wild is the wind (2018)

Gareth Davis (bass clarinet)

Originally released on *Wild is the wind* (Diatribes Records, 2020)

© Diatribe Records, Dublin

"'Wild is the Wind' (2018) was written for bass clarinetist Gareth Davis as part of his ongoing Standards project, contemporary responses to classic jazz tunes. This project appealed to me greatly, jazz being a great love of mine, and so I asked my partner for titles of some of her favourite Nina Simone songs. Her suggestion of 'Wild is the Wind' was a good one because I didn't know that song and was able to respond to it quite objectively, deconstructing the melody and some of Nina's performative gestures and making a new assembly based on those elements, while trying to retain something of the song's original character.

'Wild is the Wind' premiered at the 2018 Gaudeamus Music Week in The Netherlands. The piece is dedicated to Dušica."

"I embrace a plurality of interests, inspirations, and compositional approaches best summed up by the term *Everythingism*".

Ian Wilson has composed over 200 works in many different genres which have been performed and broadcast on six continents. He is a member of Aosdána, Ireland's national association of creative artists, and his music is published by G. Ricordi & Co. Ltd and Universal Edition.

cmc.ie/composers/ian-wilson

ianwilson.ie



9-10. Seán Clancy (b. 1984)

Sigh and *Fan* from *Inventions & Canons* (2017 - 21)

Performed, recorded, mixed, and mastered by Seán Clancy in 2021 in Dublin using environmental sounds recorded on a phone, synthesizer, drum machine, prepared piano, guitar, Ebow, and DAW.

Originally released on *Inventions & Canons* (2021)

© Seán Clancy

“‘Sigh’ and ‘Fan’ come from a collection of pieces entitled ‘Inventions & Canons’. This collection foregrounds sounds recorded on my phone between 2017–21. I conceived the album as a way to illustrate an alternative use for traditional contrapuntal techniques, which is as I see it, simply one voice moving against another, sometimes together – much like we do in life.

‘Sigh’ is the only track on the album not to use a location recording, and is simply two synthesizer voices moving against each other. ‘Fan’ contains recordings of multiple fans. It presents an incessant repeating guitar chord tuned to recordings of my bathroom fan at home, my son’s fan in his bedroom, and my dad’s handheld fan that he had in hospice. These fans are all centred around a separate recording of the refrigeration fans in a COVID-deserted hospice canteen whilst my family took turns spending our last moments with my dad before he died. As such, it documents a moment of immense personal grief and sadness.”

Seán Clancy is an experimental composer and performer from Ireland. He writes music using acoustic instruments, electronic instruments, location recordings, and people doing things in performance not involving any instruments at all. For the most part, his practice is involved with the act of translating non-musical things into music, using projected text in performance and exploring music as a devised process. His music is often long, repetitive, and contains sustained tones, but at times is also short and fragmented. His work has been performed by people as far west as Denver, Colorado, and as far east as Beijing, China. He has a performance duo with Andy Ingamells and is also a senior lecturer in music, and BMus composition coordinator at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in the UK.

cmc.ie/composers/sean-clancy

seanclancy.com

Photo: Barry McCaul



11. Roger Doyle (b. 1949)

And Can it Be from *Finnegans Wake - Suite of Affections* (2021)

Roger Doyle (electronics), Olwen Fouéré (spoken text)

Originally released on *Finnegans Wake - Suite Of Affections* (Silverdoor 2011)

© Roger Doyle © PRS/MCPS 2021

"'Finnegans Wake - Suite Of Affections' - named because of a phrase on page 432 of James Joyce's 'Finnegans Wake': 'to share our hard suite of affections with thee'.

Described by the composer as his own suite of affections, Doyle asked top actors to speak and record extracts that he has chosen from James Joyce's work, to which he composed music. He has composed 26 of them so far. This one, the last page from the work, is performed by Olwen Fouéré."

"I love composing music and do it every day. More and more as I get older."

DUBLINER Roger Doyle is known for his pioneering work as a composer of electronic music. He has worked extensively in theatre, film and dance, in particular with the music-theatre company Operating Theatre, which he co-founded with performer Olwen Fouéré. 'Babel', his magnum opus, which took ten years to compose, was released on a 5-CD set in 1999 and contained 103 pieces of music. It is a celebration of the multiplicity of musical language and evolving technologies. Other works include an onstage piano score for the Gate Theatre production of *Salomé*, directed by Steven Berkoff, which played in Dublin, London's West End and on three world tours. His electronic opera *Heresy*, premiered in The Project Arts Centre in 2016 and was released on a double album in 2018. He is a member of Aosdána, Ireland's state-sponsored academy of creative artists and was elected to the higher honour of Saoi, conferred on him by President Michael D. Higgins in 2019. A feature documentary film on the composer directed by Brian Lally, entitled 'The Curious Works Of Roger Doyle', was made in 2018.

cmc.ie/composers/roger-doyle

rogerdoyle.com

Design: Philip Darling - darling.ie

Booklet production: Meabh Noonan

Mastering: Matthew Dilley - aboutsound.co.uk

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