



Irish Composition Summer School [41st edition]

The Irish Composition Summer School will run at the Technical University Dublin Conservatory of Music, Grangegorman, Dublin City, Ireland, from July 1st to 10th.

Prospective participants should be composers at the early stages of their career, and students taking composition and considering it as a career.

Course Directors: Nicola LeFanu and Kevin O’Connell

Guest Directors: Camden Reeves, David Bremner

Performers/instruments: String Quartet from the Ficino Ensemble

Technology director: Ian Brabazon

Admin: John McLachlan

Sponsored by the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon

Supported by IMRO—the Irish Music Rights Organisation

We will offer a full day timetable that allows for composing time: the days feature group seminars (mostly mornings) and individual tutorials (afternoons).



COURSE INFORMATION

This year's school will offer a range of lectures, presentations and demonstrations on all aspects of contemporary composition, focusing on writing for any combination or subset of the available forces, from solo to quartet, with optional electronic fixed media. The school offers advice on writing for the instruments, and on all aspects of contemporary art music composition. There is considerable one to one guidance on your piece as you write it, therefore we welcome composers at any stage of their development.

At the end of the course, the students' works will be presented in workshop, rehearsed and recorded by the performers. Throughout the course, students will receive guidance from experienced course directors and nationally and internationally renowned composers. This year, the ICSS is delighted to welcome Guest Director Camden Reeves who will present seminars on his own work, as well as giving individual tutorials to all students.

Due to the limited duration of the course students are expected to come with some sketches/ideas prepared.

LEVELS

The course involves a great deal of individual tuition and so is suitable for a range of music students from postgraduate to undergraduate. The course involves a combination of one-to-one tutorials with the participating composers, and seminars for the whole group. These will cover the major aspects of contemporary composition such as harmony, rhythm, formal structure, the use of music technology and instrumental writing.

The course does not offer accommodation and participants are advised that early consideration and planning is necessary.

COMPOSERS AND PERFORMERS

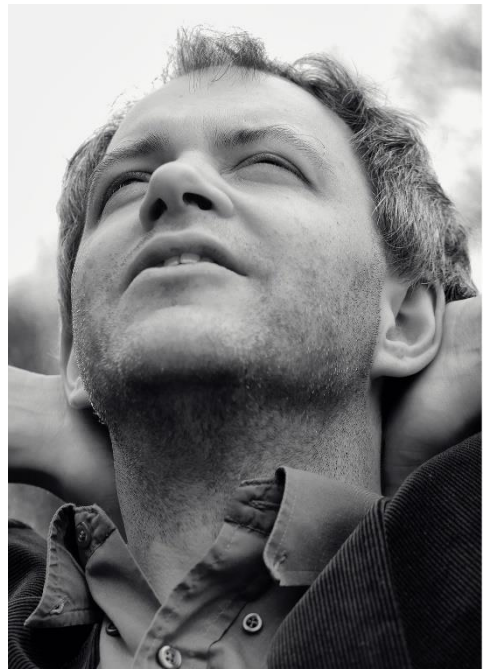
CAMDEN REEVES was born in Oxford in 1974. At the age of four he began learning music with his grandfather, a Jazz musician. Reeves read music at the University of Exeter, studying composition with Philip Grange, and at the age of just 22 was appointed Composer Fellow with the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester. Further Composition studies followed with Roger Marsh and David Blake at the University of York. In 2000-2001, Reeves was awarded a CIMO Scholarship to study with Paavo Heininen on a CIMO Fellowship at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, and he still cites his engagement with the music of Sibelius during this period as one of the most important influences underlying the organic and dramatic structure of his music.

Like Sibelius, Reeves's music takes huge inspiration from nature. He has become particularly known for an ongoing cycle of works inspired by the beauty, mystery and strangeness that lies at the bottom of our oceans, including: String Quartets 1 and 2, Scordatura Squids 1 and 2 (solo violin), Starlight Squid (Piano trio No.1) and Gorgon's Head (violin and piano). Other works have looked to Cosmology for inspiration. The large-scale Piano Concerto was informed by colliding galaxies and entropy, and String Quartet No.3 uses inflation-theory as a basis of musical unfolding. Jazz has remained an influence on his music throughout his career, but has only begun to surface explicitly in his music in recent years – in works like The Dead Broke Blues Break (Piano Trio No.2), Tangle-Beat Blues (piano solo) and Random Keys (piano, bass and percussion).



Reeves is currently Professor of Music at the University of Manchester, where he has taught since 2002.

DAVID BREMNER is a composer and pianist/organist based in Dublin. Operating in an idiom that is both minimalist in texture and harmonically complex, his current work has involved creating fabrics made from atonal drone textures, and algorithmic composition. With soprano Elizabeth Hilliard he runs the music/text production company Béal (www.bealfestival.com). In 2013 he completed a PhD, supervised by Prof. Gráinne Mulvey, at TU Dublin Conservatoire, where he now lectures in composition, teaching as part of the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, and coordinating a composition seminar series and composition workshops with resident ensemble Concorde.



His portrait double-album *Mixed Circuits*, featuring Hilliard, Andreea Banciu, Izumi Kimura and Paul Roe, was released on Farpoint Recordings in December 2022. Other recent projects include a chamber opera, *Slow Recognition*, developed in collaboration with dramaturg and director H el ene Montague and designer John Comiskey and featuring singers Elizabeth Hilliard, Naomi Louisa O'Connell and Rory Musgrave, which was produced to acclaim in July 2022, supported by Arts Council Bursary and Project funding. An ongoing collaboration with the violinist Larissa O'Grady led to a concert-length programme, shadow once complete, featuring algorithmic text, and commissions from writers Joanna Walsh and Kit Fryatt; it toured Ireland in 2022. A new commission for O'Grady premiered in 2023.

NICOLA LEFANU was born in England in 1947. She has composed around one hundred works which have been played and broadcast all over the world; her music is published by Novello and by Peters Edition. She has been commissioned by the BBC, by festivals in UK and beyond, and by leading orchestras, ensembles and soloists. Many works are available on CD, including music for strings (Naxos), Horn Concerto (NMC) and Saxophone Concerto (NEOS).



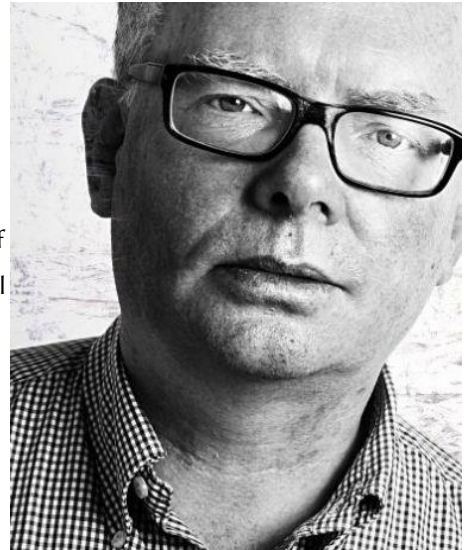
She has a particular affinity for vocal music and has composed eight operas: Dawnpath (New Opera Company, London, 1977), The Story of Mary O'Neill, a radio opera, libretto Sally McInerney, (BBC, 1987), The Green Children, a children's opera, libretto Kevin Crossley-Holland, (Kings Lynn Festival, 1990), Blood Wedding, libretto Deborah Levy (WPT, London 1992), The Wildman, libretto Crossley-Holland, (Aldeburgh Festival, 1995), Light Passing, libretto John Edmonds, (BBC/NCEM, York, 2004), Dream Hunter, libretto John Fuller (Lontano, Wales 2011, London 2012) and Tokaido Road, a Journey after Hiroshige, libretto Nancy Gaffield, (Okeanos, Cheltenham Festival, July 2014).

She is active in many aspects of the musical profession, as a composer, teacher, director and as a member of various public boards and new music organisations. From 1994 - 2008 she was Professor of Music at the University of York, where many gifted composers came to study with her. Previously she taught composition at Kings' College London; in the 1970s, she directed Morley College Music Theatre.

KEVIN O'CONNELL was born in Derry and began composing when he was twelve. He studied composition with Redmond Friel (1907-1979) before completing a music degree at Trinity College Dublin. He subsequently taught composition there and at Queen's University Belfast. Since his first BBC commission at age 25 (Concertino for 12 Players) Kevin O'Connell has completed a continuous succession of commissions including three operas and much chamber and orchestral music. His music has been played around the world.

His orchestral work *North*, commissioned by BBC Radio 3, is possibly the most performed modern Irish orchestral work. It has been succeeded by large-scale commissions for the National Symphony Orchestra including *Four Orchestral Pieces* (2007), *Symphony* (2011) and *Early Music* (2015).

In 2001 his massive String Quartet was premiered by the Lotus Quartet of Stuttgart. Other significant chamber works include *Cello Sonata* (Raphael Wallfisch), *Piano Trio no. 1* (Lontano Ensemble) and *Apollo and Marsyas* (Crash Ensemble). Recent premieres include *Piano Trio no. 2* for the Kungsbacka Trio, *Mass and Aifreann* for the Palestrina Choir, *Horn Trio* for Kirkos Ensemble, *A Batutta* for HardRain and *Carrikfergus* for the Ulster Orchestra. A new opera is planned for the RIAM opera school.



A CD of O'Connell's orchestral music from the NSO appeared in 2014 as Vol. 8 of the Lyric FM label Composers of Ireland series. O'Connell is a member of Aosdána, Ireland's academy of creative artists.

Formed in 2013, **FICINO ENSEMBLE** is an acclaimed chamber music group known for programming a breadth of musical styles. Their concerts have been described as "distinctive, transparent and carefully poised", and have been broadcast on radio programmes worldwide. Each member of the ensemble is a major force on the Irish classical and contemporary music scene, and enjoy devoting time to curated chamber music programmes.

The group regularly collaborates with composers and are devoted to the presentation of new music as the feature of diligently programmed

concerts. In 2018, the group performed a concert of Beethoven's String Quartet op. 132 in darkness, which included a reading of TS Eliot's Four Quartets read by Olwen Fouéré. Their live performances are regularly featured on RTE and BBC.



Ficino Ensemble released their debut recording *Winter* in 2018 and was long-listed for the RTÉ Choice Music Prize. It was described as "perfect in every way" (Bernard Clarke RTE Lyric Fm). Their newest album, a collaboration with Michelle O'Rourke where they recorded Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs*, was released in 2022 was described as "Bewitching" (Guardian), and included in the Guardian's Top 10 Folk Albums of 2022, and Best Contemporary Classical on Bandcamp.

Ficino Ensemble takes its name after the Renaissance polymath Marsilio Ficino who emphasised the importance of music for the enrichment of the soul.

IAN BRABAZON is a graduate of NUI, Maynooth and Trinity College Dublin, where he completed his M. Phil in Music and Media Technologies in 1999. He lectured in the Music Technology department of NUI Maynooth, while undertaking post-graduate research there. He has studied with Todd Winkler, Michael Alcorn and Roger Doyle. He has taught and recorded on the summer school over many years, and currently runs Vita Media, a sound recording and engineering company.

FEES & APPLICATIONS

Course fee: €380

Applicants should send their details to Dr John McLachlan at johnrmclachlan@gmail.com (note the middle r).

Details should include

- your name, location and a contact detail
- a summary of musical qualifications and present place of study (if studying)
- A brief summary of your experience in composition
- a list of any works composed
- The name and contact details of one composition-related referee

Applications should be emailed to the administrator by Friday, May 31st 2024.

Course directors will assess applications, and applicants will be contacted within one week of closing date. 50% of fee will be due by June 14th.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Irish Composition Summer School started as the Ennis Composition Summer School, founded in 1983 by John Buckley, and has been responsible for over thirty years of excellence in composition teaching by Irish and international composers. Previous directors have included James Wilson, John Buckley, Michael Alcorn, Martin O'Leary, Garrett Sholdice and Gráinne Mulvey. A majority of the most successful Irish composers of the last three decades have attended the Summer School. It has provided them the opportunity to work with leading names in composition—including Bent Sorensen, Poul Ruders, Christopher Fox, Liza Lim, Kevin Volans, Simon Bainbridge, Michael Finnissy, Jo Kondo and Clarence Barlow—and in performance, including Dorothy Dorow, Collette McGahon, Sylvia O'Brien, the Prey Trio, Jane Manning, the Fidelio Trio, the Clarion Horn Trio, The Ficino Ensemble and the ConTempo Quartet.