

New Music Dublin 2022  
Ergodos presents  
Tonnta: An Evening Song  
22:00, Thursday 28 April 2022 @ Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle

*The audience is requested to hold applause until the end of the performance.*

Programme:

Robbie Blake *a key* [2016]  
Christian Wolff *Song* [1973]  
Johannes Ockeghem *Mort tu as navré de ton dart* [ca. 1460]  
Síobhra Quinlan *The Hunter, The Mourning Dove & The Thieved Throat* [2022, world premiere ‡]  
Alvin Lucier *I Remember* [1997]  
Josquin des Prez *Mille regretz* [first published 1533]  
Caterina Schembri *Forest Creatures* [2022, world premiere ‡]  
Eva-Maria Houben *a hidden place* [2021, world premiere]

‡ Commissioned for Tonnta by Ergodos and New Music Dublin

This secular vespers is a meditation on memory, loss, and what we leave behind. The past and the present are fused, and new contemplative spaces open up. Brand new specially commissioned works by composers Síobhra Quinlan and Caterina Schembri are juxtaposed with plaintive Renaissance polyphony, and lushly textured soundscapes by Tonnta director Robbie Blake; Alvin Lucier, luminary of American experimental music who passed away last year; and Wandelweiser composer Eva-Maria Houben (a world premiere).

**Tonnta** is a performance company and vocal ensemble dedicated to new music. Led by vocalist and composer Robbie Blake, Tonnta champions the interdisciplinary creation and performance of music. Tonnta's sound is vibrant and dynamic – the work references the worlds of live art, contemporary dance and theatre while being rooted in sound. Tonnta prioritises performances and events that are invigorating, boundary-pushing and accessible for all. [tonnta.ie](http://tonnta.ie)

**Aisling McCormick** (soprano) is a multi-disciplinary, multi-genre creative from Dublin, based in Belfast. She is a member of HIVE Improvised Choir and performs regularly as a freelance singer. Her work as an independent dance artist spans choreography, arts participation and wellbeing. She is currently undertaking a PhD exploring collaborations between artists and health services.

**Michelle O'Rourke** (mezzo-soprano) is a singer based in Dublin, Ireland. Empowered by a background in Baroque vocal music, and ever-fascinated by the role of voice in the ritual of performance, Michelle maintains a diverse portfolio of work: from contemporary classical music, to devised interdisciplinary projects, to holistic vocal coaching.

**Emma Power** (soprano / mezzo-soprano) is a vocalist and singing teacher currently based in Cork. Alongside her work with Tonnta, Emma performs with Lassus Chamber Choir, Lyric Opera and other project ensembles during the year. She will be starting her Masters in Music Performance at the Royal Irish Academy of Music later this year.

**Rory Lynch** (tenor) is a Dublin-based singer and music teacher. A member of Chamber Choir Ireland and the choir of St Patrick's Cathedral, he works regularly with top Irish ensembles including Resurgam Choir, Sestina Music and Tonnta Music. He was recently awarded first prize in the Tenor solo competition and O'Mara Cup at Feis Ceoil.

**Robbie Blake** (baritone, director) is a composer, director, and vocalist. As a composer, they create music using open and intuitive frameworks that invite performers and audiences to actively listen. Robbie often employs movement and site-specific elements to bring awareness to our collective embodied existence. Their work and research revolves around a heart-centred, collaborative and interdisciplinary focus.

Founded in 2006 by composers Benedict Schlepper-Connolly & Garrett Sholdice, **Ergodos** is a record label and production company. Radically eclectic in its outlook, Ergodos champions music from across the gamut of musical traditions – including the commissioning of new work. Ergodos has released over 30 titles across the fields of contemporary composition, classical music, traditional Irish music, jazz, and indie music. [ergodos.ie](http://ergodos.ie)

Directed by Robbie Blake  
Curated and produced by Ergodos for New Music Dublin  
Lighting by Néstor Romero Clemente  
Audio-visual documentation by Néstor Romero Clemente & Edu Prado

Robbie Blake and Tonnta wish to thank: Síobhra Quinlan; Caterina Schembri; Garrett, Ben and all at Ergodos; John, Jon and all at New Music Dublin; Lucy Ryan and all at Smock Alley Theatre; Eve Lalor; Jessie Keenan; Paul Joyce and all at The LAB; all at the Pearse Centre.

Ergodos wishes to thank: John, Jon, Kerry and all at New Music Dublin; Aisling, Dee, and all at the OPW in Dublin Castle; Sebastian, Paul and all at Kirkos; Lioba Petrie at Kaleidoscope.



ERGODOS



**Robbie Blake** *A Key* [2016] This piece is a structured improvised work using visualisation and intuitive tuning to a space. It is inspired by the work of Pauline Oliveros and the meditative quality of her work. Each performer individually recalls places of significance and beauty. Holding these in their mind's eye/ear/heart, the performers 'tune' to these spaces. Tones emerge, creating enveloping chords of multiple times and realities existing at once.

**Robbie Blake** is a composer, director, and vocalist. As a composer, they create music using open and intuitive frameworks that invite performers and audiences to actively listen. Robbie often employs movement and site-specific elements to bring awareness to our collective embodied existence. Their work and research revolves around a heart-centred, collaborative and interdisciplinary focus.

**Christian Wolff** *Song* [1973] The first text score in Wolff's now classic "Prose Collection", *Song* provides elegantly simple instructions for the incantation of a name chosen by a solo singer, with accompaniment from the other members of the ensemble. A gentle act of exaltation.

**Christian Wolff** (b. 1934) is a key figure in the development of post-war experimental music. Initially associated with the so-called "New York School" of John Cage, Morton Feldman and Earle Brown, his work has been inspirational for subsequent generations experimental practitioners.

**Johannes Ockeghem** *Mort tu as navré de ton dart* [ca. 1460] This beautifully wrought ballade was composed upon the death of fellow composer Gilles Binchois. The lower voices sing Latin-texted music from the Mass for the Dead, while upper part presents a lament, which can be translated from the French as follows:

*Death, you have wounded with your dart  
the father of joyousness  
by unfurling your standard  
over Binchois, model of goodness.  
His body is mourned and lamented  
who lies beneath a tombstone.  
Alas, please in pity  
pray for his soul.*

**Johannes Ockeghem** (d. 1497) was the most famous composer of the Franco-Flemish School in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. His vocal compositions include masses, motets and chansons.

**Siobhira Quinlan** *The Hunter, The Mourning Dove & The Thieved Throat* [2022, world premiere, commissioned for Tonnta by Ergodos and New Music Dublin] This piece deals with memory in the form of the intrusiveness of grief, exploring it's embodied ferocity and it's contrariness – an unruly guest, entering and exiting the body of the living. Uninvited, violently vivid, whimsically. The text – by the composer – is as follows:

*I feel you most of all  
When I bleed cerise  
Or on ashen land  
Where you've never been  
It swallowed the silent scream  
Until up it rose through thieved throat  
A lullaby it coos it floats  
From above it comes  
The Mourning Dove*

*And how I'd shoot it down  
I no longer the hunted  
Would bring it to the ground  
I The Hunter  
You will crown*

*In you come*

*Were you scared too?  
Is my body betraying me as it did you  
In you come  
Uninvited, violently vivid, whimsically*

*In you come*

*Or often, not at all  
Not even as phantom limb  
The dull ache hiding from me I forage for unpicked memory  
I The Hunter*

*I feel you most of all  
When I bleed cerise  
Or on ashen land  
Where you've never been  
It swallowed the silent scream  
Until up it rose through thieved throat  
A lullaby it coos it floats  
From above it comes  
The Mourning Dove.*

**Siobhira Quinlan** is a vocalist, composer and creative producer. Her work as a performer-composer is channelled through her project sfiinx - a vehicle for her experimental avant-pop compositions, rooted in art-song, mythology and surrealism. The debut sfiinx album, *The Magma Chamber*, was released on Ergodos in early 2022. Siobhira is Ireland's new Cultural Officer in the Consulate General of Ireland, LA.

**Alvin Lucier** *I Remember* [1997] is a text score intended for voices with resonant objects. The singers explore the resonant peaks in their objects, and periodically recite personal memories.

**Alvin Lucier** (1931-2021) was a pioneer in many areas of music composition, including the notation of performers' physical gestures, the use of brain waves in live performance, the generation of visual imagery by sound in vibrating media, and the evocation of room acoustics for musical purposes.

**Josquin des Prez** *Mille regretz* [first published 1533] The French chanson *Mille Regretz* exists in a number of versions, of which Josquin's version in four parts in perhaps the best known. A possible translation:

*A thousand regrets for abandoning you  
And leaving your loving face.  
I have such great sorrow and pain  
That soon my days will be seen to be numbered.*

**Josquin des Prez** [d. 1521] was one of the greatest composers of the Renaissance period. His music spans the transition between the sound-world of the late Middle Ages and that of the High Renaissance.

**Caterina Schembri** *Forest Creatures* [2022, world premiere, commissioned for Tonnta by Ergodos and New Music Dublin] The piece emerged as an act of remembrance, a deep look back into my childhood largely spent in a house submerged in the woods of the high mountains in the outskirts of the city of Bogotá. This small geographical space that, for many years, represented an entire universe, is somehow a sanctuary to me. The text draws from symbols that are taken straight out of my personal landscape, that were for many years familiar to my eyes, or that draw from a particular memory of mine. I wanted to take these moments and images that inhabit my mind and give them colour, movement, space and time. The text is as follows:

*In the green tender morning light  
A potted orchid sits framed in the corner  
Irretrievable!*

*I am five  
My childhood looks back at me  
With two pairs of blue eyes  
I can fit in the corner  
I can fit in a white canvas  
I can fit in the sylvan wood deck day and night*

*Three plus two... Five*

*And the city lies wide underneath my feet  
While three swallows take off and fly  
Gently lifted by the hands  
Of blooming yellow senna flowers.*

**Caterina Schembri** is a Italian-Colombian composer and producer based in Dublin, gravitating around classical-contemporary music and music for film. Through her work, she likes to explore pandiatonic and modal harmonies, narrative and literary motifs, multidisciplinary intersections, and different orchestration possibilities within acoustic and hybrid ensembles. In the last years, she has composed pieces for a wide range of musicians including the BNR Orchestra, percussion ensemble Tridio, Tonnta, Spilliaert Trio, the Dublin Viols, vocalist Michelle O'Rourke and Cellist Kate Ellis. Caterina is one of the founding members of Sonic Gate, an international collective of composers focused on the creation of new music.

**Eva-Maria Houben** *a hidden place* [2021, world premiere] This piece belongs to a series of pieces describing a certain place – for example a magic place, a lonely place, a strange place and so on. The “place” is in each case characterized by a specific situation. A sweet place for example is a piece for a duo, maybe for two persons enjoying their situation to be two. This means “musical practice”: Sharing a space, sharing time, getting older together, spending time together. Each piece follows a certain path: “finding together a path into silence” – the score tells us. *a hidden place* for 5 performers evokes this situation: “getting together. being involved alone or joining a partnership within the group. finding one another. finding together a path into silence.” The practice: the members of the group learn something about each other, they meet each other in special constellations, they join in smaller groups within the group. Therefore, a performance might open the chance to point out of the musical practice into everyday life. The “place” pieces show: Music is not “only” music. It may gain the energy to point out to “realities and possibilities within ourselves and/or in our world” (following H. Lachenmann).

**Eva-Maria Houben** (b. 1955) is associated with the Wandelweiser group of composers. Her list of compositions up to now includes works for the organ, piano, clarinet, trombone, violoncello and other solo instruments, works for voice and piano, for wind and chamber ensembles, for orchestra and for voice and orchestra, and works for choir. Between 1993 and 2021 she lectured at Dortmund University's Institut für Musik und Musikwissenschaft, with both music theory and contemporary music as her focus. She has published many books concerning contemporary music, contemporary composers, and traditional music listened to with “new ears”.

## NEW MUSIC DUBLIN

*Thursday 28 April 2022*

**TOTEMIC:** Nathan Sherman and Alex Petcu  
presented by Ergodos

**CHORAL SKETCHES:** Chamber Choir Ireland

**ÉTUDES:** Kevin Volans and Jill Richards

**PERSONHOOD:** Oslo Sinfonietta

**TONNTA** presented by Ergodos

*Friday 29 April 2022*

**CORCORAN AT NMD:** Hard Rain  
Soloist Ensemble

**YOU HEARD IT FIRST:** Crash Ensemble

**ICC ALBUM LAUNCH**

**IN MEMORIAM / IN CELEBRATION:**  
National Symphony Orchestra and Ensemble  
Interforma

**AVENUE AZURE** presented by Ergodos

**SONGS FROM THE BRAIN BOOK:** Diatribe  
album launch

*Saturday 30 April 2022*

**BRASSFEST**

**LANDSCAPE SERIES** presented by Diatribe

**MUSIC FOR 5 SILENT POEMS:** George Higgs

**PUTTING IT INTO MUSIC:** Crash Ensemble

**A BRIEF DESCENT INTO DEEP TIME:**  
Chamber Choir Ireland

**DIATRIBE – JAZZ TRIPLE BILL**

*Sunday 1 May 2022*

**NARLI RECORD FAIR**

**THINGS THAT NEVER DIE:** Cór na nÓg and  
Cór Linn

**NCH CREATIVE LAB FINALE**

**NARLI AGM 2022**

**ISABELLE O'CONNELL PIANO**

**DELIVERANCE:** RTÉ Concert Orchestra

**THE POSSIBILITIES FROM HERE ARE  
ENDLESS:** Crash X Diamanda Dramm

**COLM O'HARA 10TET** presented by Diatribe

*Throughout the festival:*

**ULYSSES JOURNEY 2022:** newly  
commissioned music and film works

**WINGFORM:** an installation of music and  
light

**REACTIONS** film screenings

**HAUNTOLOGY**

**NMDX** (hosted by The Contemporary Music  
Centre, Ireland and New Music Dublin)

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