

NEW
MUS
DUB

THE DANCERS INHERIT
THE PARTY

27th April 2024, 4pm | Pepper Canister Church, Dublin

David Fennessy *chOirland* (2002)

Eoghan Desmond *I am* (2023)

Steve Reich *Clapping Music* (1972) arr. Paul Hillier

Thomas Tallis *Lamentations I*

Gabriel Jackson *The Dancers Inherit the Party* (2024) (world premiere)

Cassandra Miller *The City, Full of People* (2023)

Chamber Choir Ireland

Paul Hillier conductor

 **Chamber
Choir
Ireland**

PROGRAMME NOTES AND TEXTS

David Fennessy *chOirland* (2002)

All the words in *chOirland* are nonsense lyrics taken from the choruses of traditional Irish songs and ballads. I didn't grow up singing these songs and traditional music was never a big part of my musical life. In fact, it seems the only time I ever hear them now is when I'm in Irish bars here in Britain or in Irish gift shops where, almost inaudibly, they gently prod with their shillelagh sticks at my Irisho'meter sometimes resulting in an impromptu jig or reel or my standing on a chair and reciting the great speeches of Wolfe Tone. I kind of like my Irish badge, though – all leafy, greeny, plasticity – and play along with its tomfoolery more than I probably ought to. But, like an old friend who I take for granted, I'm sometimes mean to it and end up taking the Mick – to be sure, to be sure.

— David Fennessy

Eoghan Desmond *I am* (2023)

For this piece I took as my starting point some meditations on the nature of the Holy Spirit by the medieval composer and saint Hildegard of Bingen. I selected lines from her writings primarily describing the Holy Spirit as it relates to the natural world, and freely translated them into modern English. I expanded on some areas by adding reflections of my own, so it is difficult to say where Hildegard's writing ends and mine begins. In a real sense, we have collaborated on the text across the ages.

Musically speaking, I have drawn on popular imagery associated with the Holy Spirit, with dotted rhythms evoking tongues of flame throughout. The piece opens with a growing texture of these flickers of flame, building to a great, energetic, cosmic fire. The second section suffuses the earth with this fire, falling from heaven into a laid-back, but no less lively groove. Finally, the Holy Spirit as the voice of God in the wind sweeps away all before it, leaving nothing but a 'still small voice of calm', as the final flickers of flame die away.

— Eoghan Desmond

I am the fiery life of the divine essence of God.
I am aflame above the beauty of the field.
I am the burning in the sun and the stars and the moon.

I am the dew on the grass.
I am the shine on the river.
I am the rain.

I am the voice of God in the wind.
I am the breath of life that nurtures all things green.
I am the feather carried weightlessly on the wind.

I am the yearning for goodness.

I am.
I am.
I am.

Steve Reich *Clapping Music* (1972) arr. Paul Hillier

In 1972, Reich composed *Clapping Music* as a highly portable piece of music – requiring no instruments beyond the human body – for his ensemble, Steve Reich and the Musicians, which had just begun touring Europe the previous year. With the approval of Reich himself, Paul Hillier has arranged this sung version for chamber choir.

Thomas Tallis *Lamentations I*

Incipit lamentatio Jeremiæ prophetæ:

Here begin the lamentations of the prophet Jeremiah:

ALEPH

*Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo!
Facta est quasi vidua domina gentium;
princeps provinciarum facta est sub tributo.*

How lonely sits the city that was full of people!
How like a widow has she become, she who was great among the nations!
She who was a princess among the provinces has become a slave.

BETH

*Plorans ploravit in nocte, et lacrimæ ejus in maxillis ejus:
non est qui consoletur eam, ex omnibus caris ejus;
omnes amici ejus spreverunt eam, et facti sunt ei inimici.*

She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks;
among all her lovers she has none to comfort her;
all her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they have become her enemies.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God.

Gabriel Jackson *The Dancers Inherit the Party* (2024)

text by Ian Hamilton Finlay

Paul Hillier and I are both long-time admirers of the great Scottish artist, gardener and poet Ian Hamilton Finlay. Back in the 1990s I wrote a triptych of instrumental pieces derived, in various parameters, from concrete poems and text-based artworks by Finlay. But Paul and I have always wanted to make a setting for voices of Ian's poems so we are very grateful to the Cork International Choral Festival, Chamber Choir Ireland and New Music Dublin for making that happen.

The structure of *The Dancers Inherit the Party* owes much to the Renaissance tradition of Lamentations settings, where the Hebrew letters preceding each verse are sung to melismatic, florid music and the verses themselves – in Latin – are much more syllabic and direct in their musical treatment and framing that sequence there is often an oratorical Incipit and a final exhortation to 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominus Deum tuum'.

So, in this piece, seven melismatic five-part settings of the concrete poem 'Evening will come' precede each of Finlay's short, pithy 'Seven Orkney Lyrics', which are, in turn, framed by settings of the title poem. The piece is a 'constructed' one in other aspects

too: the Orkney lyrics are for one, two, three, four then three, two and one voice; the tempo of each poem gets progressively and proportionally quicker, and the duration progressively shorter until the mid-point, then the process is reversed; similarly, the tonic of each setting of 'Evening will come' rises to that same mid-point and then descends to its starting point. Also, the musics for these poems are constructed using various Medieval techniques and procedures – canon, organum, isorhythm, a kind of hocketing and drone-accompanied monody – and they often have a slightly 'folky' demeanour, which contrasts with the more fluid, freely composed 'Evening will come'.

— Gabriel Jackson

THE DANCERS INHERIT THE PARTY

When I have talked for an hour I feel lousy —
Not so when I have danced for an hour:
The dancers inherit the party
While the talkers wear themselves out and
sit in the corner alone, and glower.

*Evening
will
come*

*They
will sew
the blue sail*

PEEDIE MARY CONSIDERS THE SUN

The peedie sun is not so tall
He walks on golden stilts
Across, across, across the water
But I have darker air.

*Evening
will
come*

*They
will sew
the blue sail*

THE ENGLISH COLONEL EXPLAINS AN ORKNEY BOAT

The boat swims full of air.
You see, it has a point at both
Ends, sir, somewhat
As lemons. I'm explaining
The hollowness is amazing. That's
The way a boat
Floats.

*Evening
will
come*

*They
will sew
the blue sail*

MANSIE CONSIDERS PEEDIE MARY

Peedie Alice Mary is
My cousin, so we cannot kiss.
And yet I love my cousin fair:
She wears her seaboots with such an air.

Evening
will
come

They
will sew
the blue sail

A BOHEMIAN VISITOR

After three days of stormy seas
The boats, says John Sharkey, have all come out in fleas.

Evening
will
come

They
will sew
the blue sail

MANSIE CONSIDERS THE SEA IN THE MANNER OF HUGH MACDIARMID

The sea, I think, is lazy.
It just obeys the moon
—All the same I remember what Engels said:
'Freedom is the consciousness of necessity'.

Evening
will
come

They
will sew
the blue sail

FOLK SONGS FOR PEEDIE MARY

Peedie Mary
Bought a posh
Big machine
To do her wash.

Peedie Mary
Stands and greets
Where does thoo
Put in the peats?
Silly peedie
Mary thoo
Puts the peats
Below, baloo.

Peedie Mary
Greets the more,
What did the posh paint
Come off for?

Evening
will
come

They
will sew
the blue sail

JOHN SHARKEY IS PLEASED TO BE IN SOURIN AT EVENING

How beautiful, how beautiful, the mill
— Wheel not turning though the waters spill
Their single tress. The whole old mill
Leans to the West, the breast.

THE DANCERS INHERIT THE PARTY

When I have talked for an hour I feel lousy —
Not so when I have danced for an hour:
The dancers inherit the party
While the talkers wear themselves out and
sit in the corner alone, and glower.

Commissioned by Cork International Choral Festival, Chamber Choir Ireland, and New Music Dublin with funding from the Arts Council/an Chomhairle Ealaíon.

Cassandra Miller *The City, Full of People* (2023)

This rounding-turning music emerges from the concluding refrain of Thomas Tallis' Lamentations of Jeremiah I – made from my own automatic-singing as I traced canons of the original Tallis in meditation.

I remember the first time I heard the Tallis Lamentations as a teenager; the choir singing from the back of the church in a dark service during Holy Week. I don't remember if I knew in that moment – the moment where Tallis' music pauses for the striking call to return – that the words meant 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, turn back to the Lord your God', or if I knew about the destruction of the First or Second Temple, or if I had any way to understand these ancient laments for Jerusalem, 'How lonely sits the city that was full of people!' (Lamentations 1:1).

What I do remember is the clarity of that message through the music. Tallis' setting of the word 'Jerusalem' is enough to make anyone yearn to come back to a long-forgotten god. I suppose I've become a non-believer over the years; always holding a vague but deep-felt sense that I might need to return one day. In my wanderings (certainly aimless when compared to my youth), I have turned to company and community in lieu of a spiritual life. This composition – with each duo and trio as a congregation of its own – celebrates that scenario, both for its beauty and its incompleteness.

— Cassandra Miller

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God.

Commissioned by Louth Contemporary Music Society for Chamber Choir Ireland, with funding from the Arts Council/an Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Robert D. Bielecki Foundation.

BIOGRAPHIES

Chamber Choir Ireland

Sopranos

Abbi Temple
Felicity Hayward
Sarah Keating
Gemma King*

Altos

Christina Whyte
Stephen Wallace
Mark Chambers
Sarah Thursfield

Tenors

Edward Woodhouse
Christopher Bowen
Jack Granby*
Matthew Howard*

Basses

Jeffrey Ledwidge
Paul McGough
Eoghan Desmond
William Gaunt

*Deputy

Majella Hollywood CEO • David Darcy Operations Manager • Aoife Cuthbert Marketing and Development Manager • Conleth Stanley Production Co-ordinator

Board of Directors: Triona Ferriter • Scott Hayes • Pawel Krzysiek • Susan Lannigan • Clodagh Logue • Alastair Rankin • Ian Smith • Brian Walsh (Chair) • Louise Whyte

‘Music this uncalculatedly beautiful leaves you almost desperate with gratitude’
The New Yorker, 2023

Chamber Choir Ireland is the country's national chamber choir and premier professional choral ensemble, under the Artistic Direction of Grammy-winning conductor, Paul Hillier.

Recognised for their adventurous commissioning, programming, and recording, CCI's programmes span from early renaissance to cutting edge commissions. The choir brings world-class choral performances to audiences across the island and tours internationally (USA, UK, Belgium, Russia, Germany, South America).

CCI has recorded for labels such as Harmonia Mundi, RTÉ lyric fm, and Orchid Classics. Their 2020 release, Letters (Naxos) garnered a 5-star review in the Irish Times and a New Music Scotland award. Their most recent recording, Folks' Music (Louth Contemporary Music Society, 2023) was included in the New Yorker's Notable Classical Recordings of 2023.

CCI delivers an extensive Learning and Participation programme, including choral composition activities for secondary school students, bespoke workshops for community and amateur choirs, and career development programmes for emerging choral singers and established composers.

Chamber Choir Ireland receives principal funding & support from the Arts Council/an Chomhairle Ealaíon, with support from Dublin City Council and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland through its National Lottery Fund. Their international touring is supported by Culture Ireland. CCI is a resident ensemble at the National Concert Hall of Ireland, Associate Artists to Dublin City University, and a member of TENSO – the network of professional chamber choirs in Europe. In 2021, Chamber Choir Ireland welcomed President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins as Patron. chamberchoireland.com



Paul Hillier

Paul Hillier is from Dorset in England and studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. His career has embraced singing, conducting and writing. He formed the Hilliard Ensemble in 1973 and was its musical director for 17 years. In 1990 he created a new group called Theatre of Voices, which he continues to direct today. He has taught in the USA at the University of California campuses of Santa Cruz and Davis, and from 1996-2003 was Director of the Early Music Institute at Indiana University, Bloomington. He was Principal Conductor of the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir (2001-07) and Chief Conductor of Ars Nova Copenhagen (2003-23). His books about Arvo Pärt and Steve Reich are published by Oxford University Press. In 2006 he was awarded an OBE for services to choral music. In 2007 he received the Order of the White Star of Estonia, and was awarded a Grammy for Best Choral Recording.

In 2008 he became Chief Conductor of Chamber Choir Ireland and was appointed artistic director of Coro Casa da Musica in Porto (2009-19). During 2009 he was artist in residence at Yale University's Institute for Sacred Music. In 2010 he was awarded his second Grammy - for David Lang's *The Little Match Girl Passion*. In 2013 he was awarded the Order of Dannebrog (the Danish knighthood) by Her Majesty Queen Margrethe of Denmark, and last year he was awarded the Carl Nielsen Prize (Denmark).

David Fennessy

David Fennessy is an Irish composer, performer and teacher who lives and works in Scotland. His music is regularly performed nationally and internationally by leading orchestras and ensembles. Recent highlights include *OPEN GROUND* for Ensemble Modern which was performed by them alongside students from the Royal Irish Academy of Music at New Music Dublin 2023, *THE RIOT ACT*, premiered by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and his Piano Trio No. 2, which the Fidelio Trio toured around the United States in February of this year.

His *Triptych* recorded by Chamber Choir Ireland on the Naxos label won a Scottish Award for New Music and his debut CD *Panopticon* was released on the NMC label. A new CD of his work *Caruso*, was released on the Unsounds label in April 2024. His music is published by Universal Edition, Vienna. cmc.ie/composers/david-fennessy

Eoghan Desmond

Drawing on his comprehensive experience as a choral musician, Eoghan Desmond's music is characterised by its rich harmonic language, rhythmic vitality and expressive melodies. Taking inspiration from a wide range of sources, including Irish folk music, classical tradition and contemporary techniques, he cultivates a style that is both captivating and emotionally resonant.

His music has been widely performed, by ensembles such as Chamber Choir Ireland, ConTempo String Quartet and The Sixteen. His recent focus has been Irish language choral music, for which he has been the recipient of several bursaries. Last year, CCI and The Irish Chamber Orchestra premiered his cantata *Amra Choluim Chill*, for which Eoghan was awarded a PhD in composition. He is currently developing a new suite of pieces for double choir, *Guthanna ón gCnoic*, setting six reflections by poet Ceaitaí Ní Bheildiúin on Mount Brandon in Co Kerry. eoghandesmond.com

Steve Reich

Steve Reich has been called ‘the most original musical thinker of our time’ (*The New Yorker*) and ‘among the great composers of the century’ (*The New York Times*). He is one of the leading exponents of Minimalism, a style based on repetitions and combinations of simple motifs and harmonies.

His music is performed internationally by major ensembles and orchestras, including the New York and Los Angeles philharmonics; London, Sydney, San Francisco, and BBC symphony orchestras; London Sinfonietta; Kronos Quartet; Ensemble Modern; Britten Sinfonia; and Bang on a Can All-Stars.

He is the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize and multiple Grammy Awards, and the Gold Medal in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He has been awarded honorary doctorates by the Royal College of Music in London, the Juilliard School in New York and the Liszt Academy in Budapest. steverreich.com

Gabriel Jackson

Gabriel Jackson was born in Bermuda in 1962. After three years as a chorister at Canterbury Cathedral, he went on to study composition with Richard Blackford and later with John Lambert at the Royal College of Music. In 2003 he won the liturgical category at the inaugural British Composer Awards with *O Doctor optime*, and won two further prizes in the choral category with *The Spacious Firmament* in 2009 and *Airplane Cantata* in 2012. From 2010 to 2013 he was Associate Composer to the BBC Singers and he is a frequent collaborator with many of the great choirs of the world.

Alongside his work with voices he has written a number of instrumental pieces that take their inspiration from conceptual artists Richard Long, Ian Hamilton Finlay and Yoko Ono. Recent large-scale works include *The World Imagined* for tenor, chorus and orchestra commissioned by Three Choirs Festival in 2021, *Mass of St James*, also for choir and orchestra, commissioned for the bicentenary of St James’ King Street, Sydney in 2022, and the hour-long *The Christmas Story*, first performed by the Choir of Merton College and Oxford Contemporary Sinfonia in 2023. gabrieljackson.london

Cassandra Miller

Dr Cassandra Miller is a Canadian composer of vocal, chamber and orchestral music, living in London. Her notated compositions (*About Bach*, *Duet for Cello and Orchestra*, *Philip the Wanderer*, etc.) explore transcription as a creative process, through which the expressive vocal qualities of pre-existing music are both magnified and transfigured. Her non-notated compositions (*So Close*, *Tracery*) take the form of extended collaborations with solo musicians. Using an approach that combines automatic singing and mimicry, she creates vulnerable and hospitable spaces for deep listening.

She is the recipient of a Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award for Artists 2021, and has twice received the Jules-Léger Prize for New Chamber Music. *The City, Full of People*, recorded by Chamber Choir Ireland for Louth Contemporary Music Society, was included in the *New Yorker's Notable Classical Recordings of 2023*. Her works are published by Faber Music. cassandramiller.wordpress.com

NEW MUSIC DUBLIN 2024

Welcome back to New Music Dublin 2024!

In four days this April, NMD 2024 travels through more than 23 events: from the main-stage ambient music mastery of A Winged Victory for the Sullen all the way to Mariam Rezaei's virtuoso turntablism; from Aoife Ní Bhriain and Liam Byrne's ancient music reborn in *The Harmonic Labyrinth* to *ADVERT*, Laura Bowler's right-up-to-date exploration of the contemporary self; from the youthful voices of Cór Linn and Cór na nÓg in *Everyday Wonders* to Ann Cleare's exploration of deep time with Crash Ensemble in *TERRARIUM*; and it stops off at many many places in-between.

NMD 2024 is – as always – jam-packed.
It is also – as ever – wildly eclectic.

My long-suffering team here at New Music Dublin wonder where both my preference for putting together an insanely hectic programme and my general delight in eclecticism come from, and I guess they both come from the same place. The only criterion I have when I ask artists to make new works for NMD is that I shouldn't be able to imagine in advance what they're going to make, because for me, surprise and enchantment in the new is the very essence of creativity – the delight in making something that has not been thought of before. And because the number of people making genuinely creative new work here in Ireland is far, far more than can be fitted in to one festival, the festival schedule is crazy-packed with as many new things as possible (I have already apologised to the team!)

You'll also notice that I also like to throw in the occasional reminder of good things that we may have missed the first time around, to provide a bit of context and extra depth. However – fundamentally – we are here for the new adventures, the experiences we don't know of, the ideas that we've not come across before and the challenges that we didn't know we might want to accept.

Here, there is something new for everyone, and everyone is very welcome at New Music Dublin 2024!

John Harris

Festival Director, New Music Dublin

NEW MUSIC DUBLIN

Thursday 25 April 2024

THERE WILL BE NO SILENCE:

David Downes, Diatribe Stage

THE HARMONIC LABYRINTH:

Aoife Ní Bhriain & Liam Byrne, Diatribe Stage

THE MONOCHROME PROJECT

DEANE, GRIBBIN & SAARIAHO:

RTÉ Concert Orchestra

ADVERT: Laura Bowler & Decoder Ensemble

IN FORMATION: Stone Drawn Circles

Friday 26 April 2024

GERALD BARRY IN FOCUS:

Darragh Morgan & Mary Dullea

YOU HEARD IT FIRST: Crash Ensemble

FESTIVAL RECEPTION / MONOCHROME PROJECT FANFARE

HAIGH, BUCKLEY & DENNEHY:

National Symphony Orchestra

THE ARCHETYPES PROJECT:

Nathan Sherman & Alex Petcu, Diatribe Stage

AWAY: Anne La Berge & Diamanda La Berge
Dramm, Diatribe Stage

Saturday 27 April 2024

TRUMPETS: Monochrome Project

A 15 MINUTE WALK:

The Totally Made Up Orchestra

THE DANCERS INHERIT THE PARTY:

Chamber Choir Ireland

AROUND HERE, THE BIRDS PLANT THE

TREES: Natalia Beylis

AMBIENT / SYMPHONY: A Winged Victory
for the Sullen & National Symphony Orchestra

CHANGING STATES: Crash Ensemble

Sunday 28 April 2024

EARTHRISE: Musici Ireland

EVERYDAY WONDERS:

Cór Linn & Cór na nÓg

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO SLOW TRAVEL:

Kirkos

TALAMH: Evlana Sinfonietta

TERRARIUM: Crash Ensemble

IL RITORNO DEL ANGELO & MARIAM

REZAEI: Diatribe Stage

Throughout the festival:

THANKS – AN INSTALLATION:

Diamanda La Berge Dramm

INVISIBLE THREADS installation:

Scott McLaughlin

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

New Music Dublin is a partnership between:

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CEOLÁRAS
NAISIÚNTA**



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